

P. O. angl.

361^e

3

K I N G L E A R

BY

SHAKSPEARE.

J. O. Angel.

3622

K I N G L E A R

BY

SHAKSPEARE.

CAMPE'S EDITION.

NURNBERG AND NEW-YORK

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY

FREDERICK CAMPE AND C^o

W.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LIBRARY

CHICAGO, ILL.

1911

1911

1911

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

LEAR, *King of Britain.*

King of France.

Duke of Burgundy.

Duke of Cornwall.

Duke of Albany.

Earl of Kent.

Earl of Gloster.

EDGAR, *son to Gloster.*

EDMUND, *bastard son to Gloster.*

CURAN, *a courtier.*

Old Man, tenant to Gloster.

Physician.

Fool.

OSWALD, *steward to Goneril.*

An Officer, employed by Edmund.

Gentleman, attendant on Cordelia.

A Herald.

Servants to Cornwall.

GONERIL,

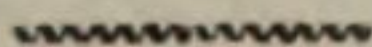
REGAN,

CORDELIA,

} *daughters to Lear.*

Knights attending on the King, Officers, Messengers, Soldiers and Attendants.

Scene, — Britain.



STANDARD LECTURES

1. The first lecture
2. The second lecture
3. The third lecture
4. The fourth lecture
5. The fifth lecture
6. The sixth lecture
7. The seventh lecture
8. The eighth lecture
9. The ninth lecture
10. The tenth lecture

11. The eleventh lecture
12. The twelfth lecture
13. The thirteenth lecture
14. The fourteenth lecture
15. The fifteenth lecture
16. The sixteenth lecture
17. The seventeenth lecture
18. The eighteenth lecture
19. The nineteenth lecture
20. The twentieth lecture

21. The twenty-first lecture
22. The twenty-second lecture
23. The twenty-third lecture
24. The twenty-fourth lecture
25. The twenty-fifth lecture
26. The twenty-sixth lecture
27. The twenty-seventh lecture
28. The twenty-eighth lecture
29. The twenty-ninth lecture
30. The thirtieth lecture

31. The thirty-first lecture
32. The thirty-second lecture
33. The thirty-third lecture
34. The thirty-fourth lecture
35. The thirty-fifth lecture
36. The thirty-sixth lecture
37. The thirty-seventh lecture
38. The thirty-eighth lecture
39. The thirty-ninth lecture
40. The fortieth lecture

41. The forty-first lecture
42. The forty-second lecture
43. The forty-third lecture
44. The forty-fourth lecture
45. The forty-fifth lecture
46. The forty-sixth lecture
47. The forty-seventh lecture
48. The forty-eighth lecture
49. The forty-ninth lecture
50. The fiftieth lecture

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Room of State in King Lear's Palace.

Enter KENT, GLOSTER, and EDMUND.

Kent. I thought, the king had more affected the duke of Albany, than Cornwall.

Glo. It did always seem so to us: but now, in the division of the kingdom, it appears not which of the dukes he values most; for equalities are so weigh'd, that curiosity in neither can make choice of either's moiety.

Kent. Is not this your son, my lord?

Glo. His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge: I have so often blush'd to acknowledge him, that now I am brazed to it.

Kent. I cannot conceive you.

Glo. Sir, this young fellow's mother could: whereupon she grew round-wombed; and had, indeed, sir, a son for her cradle, ere she had a husband for her bed. Do you smell a fault?

Kent. I cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper.

Glo. But I have, sir, a son by order of law, some year elder than this, who yet is no dearer in my account: though this knave came somewhat saucily into the world before he was sent for, yet was his mother fair; there was good sport at his making, and the whoreson must be acknowledged. — Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?

Edm. No, my lord.

Glo. My lord of Kent: remember him hereafter as my honorable friend.

Edm. My services to your lordship.

*

Kent. I must love you, and sue to know you better.

Edm. Sir, I shall study deserving.

Glo. He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again: — The king is coming.

(Trumpets sound within.)

Enter LEAR, CORNWALL, ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, CORDELIA, *and* Attendants.

Lear. Attend the Lords of France and Burgundy, Gloster.

Glo. I shall, my liege.

(Exeunt GLOSTER and EDMUND.)

Lear. Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.

Give me the map there. — Know, that we have divided,

In three, our kingdom: and 'tis our fast intent
To shake all cares and business from our age;
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
Unburden'd crawl toward death. — Our son of
Cornwall,

And you, our no less loving son of Albany,
We have this hour a constant will to publish
Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife
May be prevented now. The princes, France and
Burgundy,

Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love,
Long in our court have made their amorous so-
journ,

And here are to be answer'd. — Tell me, my
daughters,

*(Since now we will divest us, both of rule,
Interest of territory, cares of state,)*

Which of you, shall we say, doth love us most?
That we our largest bounty may extend
Where merit doth most challenge it. — Goneril,
Our eldest-born, speak first.

Gon.

Sir, I

Do love you more than words can wield the
matter,

Dearer than eye-sight, space and liberty;
Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare;

No less than life, with grace, health, beauty,
honor:

As much as child e'er loved, or father found.
A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable;
Beyond all manner of so much I love you.

Cor. What shall Cordelia do? Love, and be
silent. (*Aside.*)

Lear. Of all these bounds, even from this line
to this,

With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd,
With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,
We make thee lady: To thine and Albany's issue
Be this perpetual. — What says our second
daughter,

Our dearest Regan, wife to Cornwall? Speak.

Reg. I am made of that self metal as my sister,
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart
I find, she names my very deed of love;
Only she comes too short, — that I profess
Myself an enemy to all other joys,
Which the most precious square of sense pos-
sesses;

And find, I am alone felicitate
In your dear highness' love.

Cor. Then poor Cordelia! (*Aside.*)
And yet not so; since, I am sure, my love's
More richer than my tongue.

Lear. To thee, and thine, hereditary ever,
Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom;
No less in space, validity, and pleasure,
Than that confirm'd on Goneril. — Now, our joy,
Although the last, not least; to whose young love
The vines of France, and milk of Burgundy,
Strive to be interest'd: what can you say, to
draw

A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

Cor. Nothing, my lord.

Lear. Nothing?

Cor. Nothing.

Lear. Nothing can come of nothing: speak
again.

Cor. Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth: I love your majesty
According to my bond; nor more, nor less.

Lear. How, how, Cordelia? mend your speech
a little,
Lest it may mar your fortunes.

Cor. Good my lord,
You have begot me, bred me, loved me: I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honor you.
Why have my sisters husbands, if they say,
They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
That lord, whose hand must take my plight, shall
carry

Half my love with him, half my care, and duty:
Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters,
To love my father all.

Lear. But goes this with thy heart?

Cor. Ay, good my lord.

Lear. So young, and so untender?

Cor. So young, my lord, and true.

Lear. Let it be so. — Thy truth then be thy
dower:

For, by the sacred radiance of the sun;
The mysteries of Hecate, and the night;
By all the operations of the orbs,
From whom we do exist, and cease to be;
Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
Propinquity and property of blood,
And as a stranger to my heart and me
Hold thee, from this, for ever. The barbarous
Scythian,

Or he that makes his generation messes
To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom
Be as well neighbour'd, pitied, and relieved,
As thou my sometime daughter.

Kent. Good my liege, —

Lear. Peace, Kent!

Come not between the dragon and his wrath:
I loved her most, and thought to set my rest
On her kind nursery. — Hence, and avoid my
sight! — (*To Cordelia.*)

So be my grave my peace, as here I give
Her father's heart from her! — Call France; —
Who stirs?

Call Burgundy. — Cornwall, and Albany,
With my two daughters' dowers digest this third:

Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.
I do invest you jointly with my power,
Pre-eminence, and all the large effects
That troop with majesty. — Ourselves, by monthly
course,

With reservation of an hundred knights,
By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode
Make with you by due turns, Only we still retain
The name, and all the additions to a king;

The sway,
Revenue, execution of the rest,
Beloved sons, be yours: which to confirm,
This coronet part between you. (*Giving the crown.*)

Kent. Royal Lear,
Whom I have ever honor'd as my king,
Loved as my father, as my master follow'd,
As my great patron thought on in my prayers, —

Lear. The bow is bent and drawn, make from
the shaft.

Kent. Let it fall rather, though the fork in-
vade
The region of my heart: be Kent unmannerly,
When Lear is mad. What wouldst thou do, old
man?

Thinkst thou, that duty shall have dread to speak,
When power to flattery bows? To plainness honor's
bound,

When majesty stoops to folly. Reserve thy doom,
And, in thy best consideration, check
This hideous rashness; answer my life my jud-
gment,

Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least:
Nor are those empty-hearted, whose low sound
Reverbs no hollowness.

Lear. Kent, on thy life, no more.

Kent. My life I never held but as a pawn
To wage against thine enemies; nor fear to lose it,
Thy safety being the motive.

Lear. Out of my sight;

Kent. See better, Lear, and let me still remain
The true blank of thine eye.

Lear. Now, by Apollo, —

Kent. Now, by Apollo, king,
Thou swearst thy gods in vain.

Lear. O, vassal! miscreant!

(*Laying his hand on his sword.*)

Alb. Corn. Dear sir, forbear.

Kent. Do;

Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow
Upon the foul disease. Revoke thy gift;
Or, whilst I can vent clamor from my throat,
I'll tell thee, thou dost evil.

Lear. Hear me, recreant!

On thine allegiance, hear me! —
Since thou hast sought to make us break our vow,
(Which we durst never yet,) and, with strain'd
pride,

To come betwixt our sentence and our power;
(Which nor our nature nor our place can bear,)
Our potency make good, take thy reward.
Five days we do allot thee, for provision
To shield thee from diseases of the world;
And, on the sixth, to turn thy hated back
Upon our kingdom: if, on the tenth day fol-
lowing,

Thy banish'd trunk be found in our dominions,
The moment is thy death: Away! By Jupiter,
This shall not be revoked.

Kent. Fare thee well, king: since thus thou
wilt appear,

Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here. —
The gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid,

(*To CORDELIA.*)

That justly thinkst, and hast most rightly said! —
And your large speeches may your deeds approve,

(*To REGAN and GONERIL.*)

That good effects may spring from words of love. —
Thus Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu;
He'll shape his old course in a country new.

(*Exit.*)

Re-enter GLOSTER, *with* FRANCE, BUR-
GUNDY, *and* Attendants.

Glo. Here's France and Burgundy, my noble
lord.

Lear. My lord of Burgundy,
We first address towards you, who with this king

Hath rivall'd for our daughter; What, in the least,
Will you require in present dower with her,
Or cease your quest of love?

Bur. Most royal majesty,
I crave no more than hath your highness offer'd,
Nor will you tender less.

Lear. Right noble Burgundy,
When she was dear to us, we did hold her so;
But now her price is fall'n: Sir, there she stands;
If aught within that little, seeming substance,
Or all of it, with our displeasure pieced,
And nothing more, may fitly like your grace,
She's there, and she is yours.

Bur. I know no answer.

Lear. Sir,
Will you, with those infirmities she owes,
Unfriended, new-adopted to our hate,
Dower'd with our curse, and stranger'd with our
oath,
Take her, or leave her?

Bur. Pardon me, royal sir;
Election makes not up on such conditions.

Lear. Then leave her, sir; for, by the power
that made me,
I tell you all her wealth. — For you, great king,
(*To FRANCE.*)

I would not from your love make such a stray,
To match you where I hate; therefore beseech you
To avert your liking a more worthier way,
Than on a wretch whom nature is ashamed
Almost to acknowledge hers.

France. This is most strange!
That she, that even but now was your best object,
The argument of your praise, balm of your age,
Most best, most dearest, should in this trice of
time

Commit a thing so monstrous, to dismantle
So many folds of favor! Sure, her offence
Must be of such unnatural degree,
That monsters it, or your fore-vouch'd affection
Fall into taint: which to believe of her,
Must be a faith, that reason without miracle
Could never plant in me.

Cor. I yet beseech your majesty,

(If for I want that glib and oily art,
To speak and purpose not; since what I well intend,
I'll do't before I speak,) that you make known
It is no vicious blot, murder, or foulness,
No unchaste action, or dishonor'd step,
That hath deprived me of your grace and favor:
But even for want of that, for which I am richer;
A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue
That I am glad I have not, though not to have it,
Hath lost me in your liking.

Lear. Better thou
Hadst not been born, than not to have pleased
me better.

France. Is it but this? a tardiness in nature,
Which often leaves the history unspoke,
That it intends to do? — My lord of Burgundy,
What say you to the lady? Love is not love,
When it is mingled with respects, that stand
Aloof from the entire point. Will you have her?
She is herself a dowry.

Bur. Royal Lear,
Give but that portion which yourself proposed,
And here I take Cordelia by the hand,
Duchess of Burgundy.

Lear. Nothing: I have sworn; I am firm.

Bur. I am sorry then, you have so lost a
father,
That you must lose a husband.

Cor. Peace be with Burgundy!
Since that respects of fortune are his love,
I shall not be his wife.

France. Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich,
being poor;
Most choice, forsaken; and most loved, despised!
Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon:
Be it lawful, I take up what's cast away.
Gods, gods! 'tis strange, that from their cold'st
neglect

My love should kindle to inflamed respect. —
Thy dowerless daughter, king, thrown to my
chance,

Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France:
Not all the dukes of wat'rish Burgundy
Shall buy this unprized precious maid of me. —

Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind:
Thou lovest here, a better where to find.

Lear. Thou hast her, France: let her be thine;
for we

Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see
That face of her's again. — Therefore be gone,
Without our grace, our love, our benison. —
Come, noble Burgundy.

(*Flourish.* — *Exeunt* LEAR, BUR., CORN., ALBANY, GLOSTER,
and Attendants.)

France. Bid farewell to your sisters.

Cor. The jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes
Cordelia leaves you: I know you what you are:
And, like a sister, am most loath to call
Your faults, as they are named. Use well our
father:

To your professed bosoms I commit him:
But yet, alas! stood I within his grace,
I would prefer him to a better place.
So farewell to you both.

Gon. Prescribe not us our duties.

Reg. Let your study
Be, to content your lord; who hath received you
At fortune's alms. You have obedience scanted,
And well are worth the want that you have wanted.

Cor. Time shall unfold what plaited cunning
hides;
Who cover faults, at last shame them derides.
Well may you prosper!

France. Come, my fair Cordelia.

(*Exeunt* FRANCE and CORDELIA.)

Gon. Sister, it is not a little I have to say, of
what most nearly appertains to us both. I think,
our father will hence to-night.

Reg. That's most certain, and with you; next
month with us.

Gon. You see how full of changes his age is;
the observation we have made of it hath not been
little: he always loved our sister most; and with
what poor judgment he hath now cast her off,
appears too grossly.

Reg. 'Tis the infirmity of his age: yet he hath
ever but slenderly known himself.

Gon. The best and soundest of his time hath

been but rash; then must we look to receive from his age, not alone the imperfections of long-engrafted condition, but therewithal, the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them.

Reg. Such unconstant starts are we like to have from him, as this of Kent's banishment.

Gon. These is further compliment of leave-taking between France and him. Pray you, let us hit together: If our father carry authority with such dispositions as he bears, this last surrender of his will but offend us.

Reg. We shall further think of it.

Gon. We must do something, and i'the heat.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II.

A Hall in the Earl of Gloster's Castle.

Enter EDMUND, with a Letter.

Edm. Thou, nature, art my goddess; to thy law
My services are bound: Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom; and permit
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore base?
When my dimensions are as well compact,
My mind as generous, and my shape as true
As honest madam's issue: Why brand they us
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?
Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take
More composition and fierce quality,
Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,
Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,
Got 'tween asleep and wake? — Well then,
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund,
As to the legitimate: — Fine word, — legitimate!
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
Shall top the legitimate. I grow; I prosper: —
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

Enter GLOSTER.

Glo. Kent banish'd thus! And France in choler parted!

And the king gone to-night! subscribed his power!
Confined to exhibition! All this done
Upon the gad! — — Edmund! How now? what news?

Edm. So please your lordship, none.

(Putting up the Letter.)

Glo. Why so earnestly seek you to put up that letter?

Edm. I know no news, my lord.

Glo. What paper were you reading?

Edm. Nothing, my lord.

Glo. No? What needed then that terrible despatch of it into your pocket? the quality of nothing hath not such need to hide itself. Let's see: Come, if it be nothing, I shall not need spectacles.

Edm. I beseech you, sir, pardon me: it is a letter from my brother, that I have not all o'er-read; for so much as I have perused, I find it not fit for your over-looking.

Glo. Give me the letter, sir.

Edm. I shall offend, either to detain or give it. The contents, as in part I understand them, are to blame.

Glo. Let's see, let's see.

Edm. I hope, for my brother's justification, he wrote this but as an essay or taste of my virtue.

Glo. *(Reads.)* This policy, and reverence of age, makes the world bitter to the best of our times; keeps our fortunes from us, till our oldness cannot relish them. I begin to find an idle and fond bondage in the oppression of aged tyranny; who sways, not as it hath power, but as it is suffered. Come to me, that of this I may speak more. If our father would sleep till I waked him, you should enjoy half his revenue for ever, and live the beloved of your brother, Edgar. — Humph — Conspiracy! — Sleep till I waked him — you should enjoy half his revenue, — My son Edgar! — Had he a hand to write this? a heart and

brain to breed it in? — When came this to you? Who brought it?

Edm. It was not brought me, my lord, there's the cunning of it; I found it thrown in at the casement of my closet.

Glo. You know the character to be your brother's?

Edm. If the matter were good, my lord, I durst swear it were his; but, in respect of that, I would fain think it were not.

Glo. It is his.

Edm. It is his hand, my lord; but, I hope, his heart is not in the contents.

Glo. Hath he never heretofore sounded you in this business?

Edm. Never, my lord: But I have often heard him maintain it to be fit, that, sons at perfect age, and fathers declining, the father should be as ward to the son, and the son manage his revenue.

Glo. O villain, villain! — His very opinion in the letter! — Abhorred villain! Unnatural, detested, brutish villain! worse than brutish! — Go, sirrah, seek him; I'll apprehend him: — Abominable villain! — Where is he?

Edm. I do not well know, my lord. If it shall please you to suspend your indignation against my brother, till you can derive from him better testimony of his intent, you shall run a certain course; where, if you violently proceed against him, mistaking his purpose, it would make a great gap in your own honor, and shake in pieces the heart of his obedience. I dare pawn down my life for him, that he hath writ this to feel my affection to your honor, and to no other pretence of danger.

Glo. Think you so?

Edm. If your honor judge it meet, I will place you where you shall hear us confer of this, and by an auricular assurance have your satisfaction; and that without any further delay than this very evening.

Glo. He cannot be such a monster.

Edm. Nor is not, sure.

Glo. To his father, that so tenderly and entirely loves him. — Heaven and earth! — Edmund, seek him out; wind me into him, I pray you: frame the business after your own wisdom: I would unstate myself, to be in a due resolution.

Edm. I will seek him, sir, presently; convey the business as I shall find means, and acquaint you withal.

Glo. These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us: Though the wisdom of nature can reason it thus and thus, yet nature finds itself scourged by the sequent effects: love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide: in cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond cracked between son and father. This villain of mine comes under the prediction; there's son against father: the king falls from bias of nature; there's father against child. We have seen the best of our time: Machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders, follow us disquietly to our graves! — Find out this villain, Edmund, it shall lose thee nothing; do it carefully: — And the noble and true-hearted Kent banished! his offence, honesty! — Strange! strange! (*Exit.*)

Edm. This is the excellent foppery of the world! that, when we are sick in fortune, (often the surfeit of our behaviour,) we make guilty of our disasters, the sun, the moon, and the stars: as if we were villains by necessity; fools, by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers, by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on: An admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the dragon's tail; and my nativity was under *ursa major*; so that it follows, I am rough and lecherous. — Tut, I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing. Edgar —

Enter EDGAR.

and pat he comes, like the catastrophe of the old comedy: My cue is villanous melancholy, with a sigh like Tom o'Bedlam. — O, these eclipses do portend these divisions! fa, sol, la, mi.

Edg. How now, brother Edmund? What serious contemplation are you in?

Edm. I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read this other day, what should follow these eclipses.

Edg. Do you busy yourself with that?

Edm. I promise you, the effects he writes of, succeed unhappily: as of unnaturalness between the child and the parent; death, dearth, dissolutions of ancient amities; divisions in state, menaces and maledictions against king and nobles; needless diffidences, banishment of friends, dissipation of cohorts, nuptial breaches, and I know not what.

Edg. How long have you been a sectary astronomical?

Edm. Come, come; when saw you my father last?

Edg. Why, the night gone by.

Edm. Spake you with him?

Edg. Ay, two hours together.

Edm. Parted you in good terms? Found you no displeasure in him, by word or countenance?

Edg. None at all.

Edm. Bethink yourself, wherein you may have offended him: and at my entreaty, forbear his presence, till some little time hath qualified the heat of his displeasure; which at this instant so rageth in him, that with the mischief of your person it would scarcely allay.

Edg. Some villain hath done me wrong.

Edm. That's my fear. I pray you, have a continent forbearance, till the speed of his rage goes slower; and, as I say, retire with me to my lodging, from whence I will fitly bring you to hear my lord speak: Pray you, go; there's my key: — If you do stir abroad, go armed.

Edg. Armed, brother?

Edm. Brother, I advise you to the best: go

armed; I am no honest man, if there be any good meaning towards you: I have told you what I have seen and heard, but faintly; nothing like the image and horror of it: Pray you, away.

Edg. Shall I hear from you anon?

Edm. I do serve you in this business. —

(*Exit EDGAR.*)

A credulous father, and a brother noble,
Whose nature is so far from doing harms,
That he suspects none: on whose foolish honesty
My practices ride easy! — I see the business. —
Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit:
All with me's meet, that I can fashion fit.

(*Exit.*)

SCENE III.

A Room in the Duke of Albany's Palace.

Enter GONERIL and Steward.

Gon. Did my father strike my gentleman for chiding of his fool?

Stew. Ay, madam.

Gon. By day and night! he wrongs me; every hour

He flashes into one gross crime or other,
That sets us all at odds: I'll not endure it:
His knights grow riotous, and himself upbraids us
On every trifle: — When he returns from hunting,
I will not speak with him; say, I am sick: —
If you come slack of former services,
You shall do well; the fault of it I'll answer.

Stew. He's coming, madam; I hear him.

(*Horns within.*)

Gon. Put on what weary negligence you please,
You and your fellows; I'd have it come to question;
If he dislike it, let him to my sister,
Whose mind and mine, I know, in that are one,
Not to be over-ruled. Idle old man,
That still would manage those authorities,
That he hath given away! — Now, by my
life,
Old fools are babes again; and must be used

With checks, as flatteries, — when they are seen abused.

Remember what I have said.

Stew.

Very well, madam.

Gon. And let his knights have colder looks among you;

What grows of it, no matter; advise your fellows so:

I would breed from hence occasions, and I shall, That I may speak: — I'll write straight to my sister,

To hold my very course: — Prepare for dinner.

(Exeunt.)

SCENE IV.

A Hall in the same.

Enter KENT, disguised.

Kent. If but as well I other accents borrow,
That can my speech diffuse, my good intent
May carry through itself to that full issue
For which I razed my likeness. — Now, banish'd

Kent,

If thou canst serve where thou dost stand condemn'd,

(So may it come!) thy master, whom thou lovest,
Shall find thee full of labors.

Horns within. Enter LEAR, Knights, and Attendants.

Lear. Let me not stay a jot for dinner: go, get it ready. *(Exit an Attendant.)* How now, what art thou?

Kent. A man, sir.

Lear. What dost thou profess? What wouldst thou with us?

Kent. I do profess to be no less than I seem; to serve him truly, that will put me in trust; to love him that is honest; to converse with him that is wise, and says little; to fear judgment; to fight, when I cannot choose; and to eat no fish.

Lear. What art thou?

Kent. A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor as the king.

Lear. If thou be as poor for a subject, as he is for a king, thou art poor enough. What wouldst thou?

Kent. Service.

Lear. Who wouldst thou serve?

Kent. You.

Lear. Dost thou know me, fellow?

Kent. No, sir; but you have that in your countenance, which I would fain call master.

Lear. What's that?

Kent. Authority.

Lear. What services canst thou do?

Kent. I can keep honest counsel, ride, run, mar a curious tale in telling it, and deliver a plain message bluntly: that which ordinary men are fit for, I am qualified in; and the best of me is diligence.

Lear. How old art thou?

Kent. Not so young, sir, to love a woman for singing; nor so old, to dote on her for any thing: I have years on my back forty-eight.

Lear. Follow me; thou shalt serve me; if I like thee no worse after dinner, I will not part from thee yet. — Dinner, ho, dinner! — Where's my knave? my fool? Go you, and call my fool hither:

Enter Steward.

You, you, sirrah, where's my daughter?

Stew. So please you, — (*Exit.*)

Lear. What says the fellow there? Call the clotpoll back. — Where's my fool, ho? — I think the world's asleep. — How now? where's that mongrel?

Knight. He says, my lord, your daughter is not well.

Lear. Why came not the slave back to me, when I call'd him?

Knight. Sir, he answer'd me in the roundest manner, he would not.

Lear. He would not!

Knight. My lord, I know not what the matter

is; but, to my judgment, your highness is not entertain'd with that ceremonious affection as you were wont; there's a great abatement of kindness appears, as well in the general dependants, as in the duke himself also, and your daughter.

Lear. Ha! say'st thou so?

Knight. I beseech you, pardon me, my lord, if I be mistaken; for my duty cannot be silent, when I think your highness is wrong'd.

Lear. Thou but remember'st me of mine own conception; I have perceived a most faint neglect of late; which I have rather blamed as mine own jealous curiosity, than as a very pretence and purpose of unkindness: I will look further into't. — But where's my fool? I have not seen him these two days.

Knight. Since my young lady's going into France, sir, the fool hath much pined away.

Lear. No more of that; I have noted it well. — Go you, and tell my daughter I would speak with her. — Go you, call hither my fool.

Re-enter Steward.

O, you sir, you sir, come you hither: Who am I, sir?

Stew. My lady's father.

Lear. My lady's father! my lord's knave: you whoreson dog! you slave! you cur!

Stew. I am none of this, my lord; I beseech you, pardon me.

Lear. Do you bandy looks with me, you rascal?

(Striking him.)

Stew. I'll not be struck, my lord.

Kent. Nor tripped neither; you base football player. *(Tripping up his heels.)*

Lear. I thank thee, fellow; thou servest me, and I'll love thee.

Kent. Come, sir, arise, away; I'll teach you differences; away, away: If you will measure your lubber's length again, tarry: but, away: go to; Have you wisdom? so.

(Pushes the Stewart out.)

Lear. Now, my friendly knave, I thank thee:
there's earnest of thy service.

(*Giving KENT money.*)

Enter Fool.

Fool. Let me hire him too; — Here's my coxcomb. (*Giving KENT his Cap.*)

Lear. How now, my pretty knave? how dost thou?

Fool. Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

Kent. Why, fool?

Fool. Why? For taking one's part that is out of favor: Nay, an thou canst not smile as the wind sits, thou'lt catch cold shortly: There, take my coxcomb: Why, this fellow has banish'd two of his daughters, and did the third a blessing against his will; if thou follow him, thou must needs wear my coxcomb. — How now, nuncle? 'Would I had two coxcombs, and two daughters!

Lear. Why, my boy?

Fool. If I gave them all my living, I'd keep my coxcombs myself: There's mine; beg another of thy daughters.

Lear. Take heed, sirrah; the whip.

Fool. Truth's a dog that must to kennel; he must be whipped out, when Lady, the brach, may stand by the fire and stink.

Lear. A pestilent gall to me!

Fool. Sirrah, I'll teach thee a speech.

Lear. Do.

Fool. Mark it, nuncle: —

Have more than thou showest,
Speak less than thou knowest,
Lend less than thou owest,
Ride more than thou goest,
Learn more than thou trowest,
Set less than thou throwest;
Leave thy drink and thy whore,
And keep in-a-door,
And thou shalt have more
Than two tens to a score.

Lear. This is nothing, fool.

Fool. Then 'tis like the breath of an unfee'd

lawyer; you gave me nothing for't: Can you make no use of nothing, nuncle?

Lear. Why, no, boy; nothing can be made out of nothing.

Fool. Prithee, tell him, so much the rent of his land comes to; he will not believe a fool.

(*To KENT.*)

Lear. A bitter fool!

Fool. Dost thou know the difference, my boy, between a bitter fool and a sweet fool?

Lear. No, lad; teach me.

Fool. That lord, that counsell'd thee
To give away thy land,
Come, place him here by me, —
Or do thou for him stand:
The sweet and bitter fool
Will presently appear;
The one in motley here,
The other found out there.

Lear. Dost thou call me fool, boy?

Fool. All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou wast born with.

Kent. This is not altogether fool, my lord.

Fool. No, 'faith, lords and great men will not let me; if I had a monopoly out, they would have part on't: and ladies too, they will not let me have all fool to myself; they'll be snatching. — Give me an egg, nuncle, and I'll give thee two crowns.

Lear. What two crowns shall they be?

Fool. Why, after I have cut the egg i' the middle, and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest thy crown i' the middle, and gavest away both parts, thou borest thine ass on thy back over the dirt: Thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown, when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipp'd that first finds it so.

Fools had ne'er less grace in a year; (Sings.)

*For wise men are grown foppish;
And know not how their wits to wear,
Their manners are so apish.*

Lear. When were you wont to be so full of songs, sirrah?

Fool. I have used it, nuncle, ever since thou madest thy daughters thy mother: for when thou gavest them the rod, and put'st down thine own breeches,

Then they for sudden joy did weep, (Sings.)

And I for sorrow sung,

That such a king should play bo-peep,

And go the fools among.

Prithee, nuncle, keep a schoolmaster that can teach thy fool to lie; I would fain learn to lie.

Lear. If you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipp'd.

Fool. I marvel, what kin thou and thy daughters are: they'll have me whipp'd for speaking true, thou'lt have me whipp'd for lying; and, sometimes, I am whipp'd for holding my peace. I had rather be any kind of thing, than a fool: and yet I would not be thee, nuncle; thou hast pared thy wit o'both sides, and left nothing in the middle: Here comes one o'the parings.

Enter GONERIL.

Lear. How now, daughter! what makes that frontlet on? Methinks, you are too much of late i' the frown.

Fool. Thou wast a pretty fellow, when thou hadst no need to care for her frowning; now thou art an O without a figure: I am better than thou art now; I am a fool, thou art nothing. — Yes, forsooth, I will hold my tongue; so your face *(To Gon.)* bids me, though you say nothing. Mum, mum,

He that keeps nor crust nor crum,

Weary of all, shall want some. —

That's shealed peascod. *(Pointing to LEAR)*

Gon. Not only, sir, this your all-licensed fool,

But other of your insolent retinue
Do hourly carp and quarrel; breaking forth
In rank and not-to-be endured riots. Sir,
I had thought, by making this well known unto
you,

To have found a safe redress; but now grow
fearful,

By what yourself too late have spoke and done,

That you protect this course, and put it on
By your allowance; which if you should, the fault
Would not 'scape censure, nor the redresses sleep;
Which in the tender of a wholesome weal,
Might in their working do you that offence,
Which else were shame, that then necessity
Will call discreet proceeding.

Fool. For you trow, nuncle,
The hedge sparrow fed the cuckoo so long,
That it had its head bit off by his young.
So, out went the candle, and we were left darkling.

Lear. Are you our daughter?

Gon. Come, sir, I would, you would make
use of that good wisdom whereof I know you are
fraught; and put away these dispositions, which
of late transform you from what you rightly are.

Fool. May not an ass know when the cart
draws the horse? Whoop, Jug! I love thee.

Lear. Does any here know me? — Why this
is not Lear: does Lear walk thus? speak thus?
Where are his eyes? Either his notion weakens,
or his discernings are lethargied. — Sleeping or
waking? — Ha! sure 'tis not so. — Who is it
that can tell me who I am? — Lear's shadow?
I would learn that; for by the marks of sover-
eignty, knowledge, and reason, I should be false
persuaded I had daughters. —

Fool. Which they will make an obedient father.

Lear. Your name, fair gentlewoman?

Gon. Come, sir;

This admiration is much o' the favor
Of other your new pranks. I do beseech you
To understand my purposes aright:
As you are old and reverend, you should be wise:
Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires;
Men so disorder'd, so debauch'd and bold,
That this our court, infected with their manners,
Shows like a riotous inn: epicurism and lust
Make it more like a tavern or a brothel,
Than a graced palace. The shame itself doth
speak

For instant remedy: Be then desired
By her, that else will take the thing she begs,
A little to disquantity your train;

And the remainder, that shall still depend,
To be such men as may besort your age,
And know themselves and you.

Lear. Darkness and devils! —
Saddle my horses; call my train together. —
Degenerate bastard! I'll not trouble thee;
Yet have I left a daughter.

Gon. You strike my people; and your dis-
ordered rabble
Make servants of their betters.

Enter ALBANY.

Lear. Woe, that too late repents, — O, sir,
are you come?
Is it your will? (*To ALB.*) Speak, sir. — Prepare
my horses.

Ingratitude! thou marble-hearted fiend,
More hideous, when thou show'st thee in a child,
Than the sea-monster!

Alb. Pray, sir, be patient.

Lear. Detested kite! thou liest: (*To GON.*)
My train are men of choice and rarest parts,
That all particulars of duty know:
And in the most exact regard support
The worships of their name. O most small fault,
How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!
Which, like an engine, wrench'd my frame of
nature
From the fix'd place; drew from my heart all
love,
And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear!
Beat at this gate that let thy folly in,

(*Striking his head.*)

And thy dear judgment out. — Go, go, my people.

Alb. My lord, I am guiltless, as I am ig-
norant
Of what hath moved you.

Lear. It may be so, my lord. — Hear, nature,
hear;
Dear goddess, hear! Suspend thy purpose, if
Thou didst intend to make this creature fruitful!
Into her womb convey sterility!
Dry up in her the organs of increase;
And from her derogate body never spring

A babe to honor her! If she must teem,
 Create her child of spleen; that it may live,
 And be a thwart disnatured torment to her!
 Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth;
 With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks;
 Turn all her mother's pains and benefits,
 To laughter and contempt; that she may feel
 How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
 To have a thankless child! — Away, away!

(Exit.)

Alb. Now, gods, that we adore, whereof
 comes this?

Gon. Never afflict yourself to know the cause;
 But let his disposition have that scope
 That dotage gives it.

Re-enter LEAR.

Lear. What, fifty of my followers, at a clap!
 Within a fortnight?

Alb. What's the matter, sir?

Lear. I'll tell thee; — Life and death! I am
 ashamed
 That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus;
 (To GONERIL.)
 That these hot tears, which break from me per-
 force,
 Should make thee worth them. — Blasts and fogs
 upon thee!

The untented woundings of a father's curse
 Pierce every sense about thee! — Old fond eyes,
 Beweep this cause again, I'll pluck you out;
 And cast you with the waters that you lose,
 To temper clay. — Ha! is it come to this?
 Let it be so: — Yet have I left a daughter,
 Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable:
 When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails
 She'll flay thy wolfish visage. Thou shalt find
 That I'll resume the shape which thou dost think
 I have cast off for ever; thou shalt, I warrant
 thee. (Exeunt LEAR, KENT, and Attendants.)

Gon. Do you mark that, my lord?

Alb. I cannot be so partial, Goneril,
 To the great love I bear you, —

Gon. Pray you, content. — What, Oswald, ho!

You, sir, more knave than fool, after your master.
(*To the Fool.*)

Fool. Nuncle Lear, nuncle Lear, tarry, and take the fool with thee.

A fox, when one has caught her,
And such a daughter,
Should sure to the slaughter,
If my cap would buy a halter;
So the fool follows after. (*Exit.*)

Gon. This man hath had good counsel. — A hundred knights!

'Tis politic, and safe, to let him keep
At point, a hundred knights. Yes, that on every dream,

Each buz, each fancy, each complaint, dislike,
He may enguard his dotage with their powers,
And hold our lives in mercy. — Oswald, I say! —

Alb. Well, you may fear too far.

Gon. Safer than trust:

Let me still take away the harms I fear,
Not fear still to be taken. I know his heart:
What he hath utter'd, I have writ my sister;
If she sustain him and his hundred knights,
When I have show'd the unfitness, — How now,
Oswald?

Enter Steward.

What, have you writ that letter to my sister?

Stew. Ay, madam.

Gon. Take you some company, and away to horse:

Inform her full of my particular fear;
And thereto add such reasons of your own,
As may compact it more. Get you gone;
And hasten your return. (*Exit Stew.*) No, no,
my lord,

This milky gentleness, and course of yours,
Though I condemn it not, yet, under pardon,
You are much more attask'd for want of wisdom,
Than praised for harmful mildness.

Alb. How far your eyes may pierce, I cannot tell;
Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.

Gon. Nay, then —

Alb. Well, well; the event. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE V.

Court before the same.

Enter LEAR, KENT, *and* Fool.

Lear. Go you before to Gloster with these letters: acquaint my daughter no further with any thing you know, than comes from her demand out of the letter: If your diligence be not speedy, I shall be there before you.

Kent. I will not sleep, my lord, till I have delivered your letter. (*Exit.*)

Fool. If a man's brains were in his heels, were't not in danger of kibes?

Lear. Ay, boy.

Fool. Then, I prithee, be merry; thy wit shall not go slipshod.

Lear. Ha, ha, ha!

Fool. Shalt see, thy other daughter will use thee kindly; for though she's as like this as a crab is like an apple, yet I can tell what I can tell.

Lear. Why, what canst thou tell, my boy?

Fool. She will taste as like this, as a crab does to a crab. Thou canst tell, why one's nose stands i' the middle of his face?

Lear. No.

Fool. Why, to keep his eyes on either side his nose; that what a man cannot smell out, he may spy into.

Lear. I did her wrong: —

Fool. Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?

Lear. No.

Fool. Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has a house.

Lear. Why?

Fool. Why, to put his head in; not to give it away to his daughters, and leave his horns without a case.

Lear. I will forget my nature. — So kind a father! — Be my horses ready?

Fool. Thy asses are gone about 'em. The reason why the seven stars are no more than seven, is a pretty reason.

Lear. Because they are not eight?

Fool. Yes, indeed: Thou wouldst make a good fool.

Lear. To take it again perforce! — Monster ingratitude!

Fool. If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I'd have thee beaten for being old before thy time.

Lear. How's that?

Fool. Thou shouldst not have been old, before thou hadst been wise.

Lear. O let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!

Keep me in temper; I would not be mad!

Enter Gentleman.

How now! Are the horses ready?

Gent. Ready, my lord.

Lear. Come, boy.

Fool. She that is maid now, and laughs at my departure,
Shall not be a maid long, unless things be cut shorter. (*Exeunt.*)

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Court within the Castle of the Earl of Glouster.

Enter EDMUND and CURAN, meeting.

Edm. Save thee, Curan.

Cur. And you, sir. I have been with your father; and given him notice, that the duke of Cornwall, and Regan his duchess, will be here with him to-night.

Edm. How comes that?

Cur. Nay, I know not: You have heard of the news abroad; I mean, the whispered ones, for they are yet but ear-kissing arguments?

Edm. Not I; Pray you, what are they?

Cur. Have you heard of no likely wars toward, 'twixt the dukes of Cornwall and Albany?

Edm. Not a word.

Cur. You may then, in time. Fare you well, sir. (*Exit.*)

Edm. The duke be here to-night? The better! Best!

This weaves itself perforce into my business!
My father hath set guard to take my brother;
And I have one thing, of a queazy question,
Which I must act: — Briefness, and fortune,
work! —

Brother, a word; descend: — Brother, I say;

Enter EDGAR.

My father watches: — O sir, fly this place;
Intelligence is given where you are hid;
You have now the good advantage of the night:
Have you not spoken 'gainst the duke of Cornwall?

He's coming hither; now, i' the night, i' the haste,
And Regan with him; Have you nothing said
Upon his party 'gainst the duke of Albany?
Advise yourself.

Edg. I am sure on't, not a word.

Edm. I hear my father coming, — Pardon me: —

In cunning, I must draw my sword upon you: —
Draw: Seem to defend yourself: Now quit you well.

Yield: come before my father; — Light, ho, here! —
Fly, brother; — Torches! torches! — So, farewell. — (*Exit EDGAR.*)

Some blood drawn on me would beget opinion
(*Wounds his arm.*)

Of my more fierce endeavour: I have seen drunkards

Do more than this in sport. — Father! Father!
Stop, stop! No help?

Enter GLOSTER and Servant, with Torches.

Glo. Now, Edmund, where's the villain?

Edm. Here stood he in the dark, his sharp sword out,
Mumbl'ing of wicked charms, conjuring the moon
To stand his auspicious mistress: —

Glo. But where is he?

Edm. Look sir, I bleed.

Glo. Where is the villain, Edmund?

Edm. Fled this way, sir. When by no means
he could —

Glo. Pursue him, ho! — Go after. (*Exit Serv.*)
By no means, — what?

Edm. Persuade me to the murder of your
lordship;

But that I told him, the revenging gods
'Gainst parricides did all their thunders bend;
Spoke, with how manifold and strong a bond
The child was bound to the father; — Sir, in fine,
Seeing how loathly opposite I stood
To his unnatural purpose, in fell motion,
With his prepared sword, he charges home
My unprovided body, lanced mine arm:
But when he saw my best alarm'd spirits,
Bold in the quarrel's right, roused to the en-
counter,

Or whether gasted by the noise I made,
Full suddenly he fled.

Glo. Let him fly far:

Not in this land shall he remain uncaught;
And found — Despatch. — The noble duke my
master,

My worthy arch and patron, comes to-night:
By his authority I will proclaim it,
That he, which finds him, shall deserve our thanks,
Bringing the murderous coward to the stake;
He that conceals him, death.

Edm. When I dissuaded him from his intent,
And found him pight to do it, with curst speech
I threaten'd to discover him: He replied,
*Thou unpossessing bastard! dost thou think,
If I would stand against thee, would the reposal*

*Of any trust, virtue, or worth, in thee
 Make thy words faith'd! No: what I should deny,
 (As this I would; ay, though thou didst produce
 My very character,) I'd turn it all
 To thy suggestion, plot, and damned practice:
 And thou must make a dullard of the world,
 If they not thought the profits of my death
 Were very pregnant and potential spurs
 To make thee seek it.*

Glo. Strong and fasten'd villain;
 Would he deny his letter? — I never got him.

(Trumpets within.)

Hark, the duke's trumpets! I know not why he
 comes: —

All ports I'll bar! the villain shall not 'scape;
 The duke must grant me that; besides, his picture,
 I will send far and near, that all the kingdom
 May have due note of him; and of my land,
 Loyal and natural boy, I'll work the means
 To make thee capable.

*Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, and
 Attendants.*

Corn. How now, my noble friend? since I
 came hither,
 (Which I can call but now,) I have heard strange
 news.

Reg. If it be true, all vengeance comes too
 short,
 Which can pursue the offender. How dost, my
 lord?

Glo. O, madam, my old heart is crack'd, is
 crack'd!

Reg. What, did my father's godson seek your
 life?

He whom my father named? your Edgar?

Glo. O lady, lady, shame would have it hid!

Reg. Was he not companion with the riotous
 knights

That tend upon my father?

Glo.

I know not, madam:

It is too bad, too bad. —

Edm.

Yes, madam, he was.

Reg. No marvel then, though he were ill affected;
'Tis they have put him on the old man's death,
To have the waste and spoil of his revenues.
I have this present evening from my sister
Been well inform'd of them; and with such cautions,
That, if they come to sojourn at my house,
I'll not be there.

Corn. Nor I, assure thee, Regan. —
Edmund, I hear that you have shown your father
A child-like office.

Edm. 'Twas my duty, sir.

Glo. He did bewray his practice; and received
This hurt you see, striving to apprehend him.

Corn. Is he pursued?

Glo. Ay, my good lord, he is.

Corn. If he be taken, he shall never more
Be fear'd of doing harm: make your own purpose,
How in my strength you please. — For you,
Edmund,

Whose virtue and obedience doth this instant
So much commend itself, you shall be ours;
Natures of such deep trust we shall much need;
You we first seize on.

Edm. I shall serve you, sir,
Truly, however else.

Glo. For him I thank your grace.

Corn. You know not why we came to visit
you, —

Reg. Thus out of season; threading darkeyed
night.

Occasions, noble Gloster, of some poize,
Wherein we must have use of your advice: —
Our father he hath writ, so hath our sister,
Of differences, which I best thought it fit
To answer from our home; the several messengers
From hence attend despatch. Our good old friend,
Lay comforts to your bosom; and bestow
Your needful counsel to our business,
Which craves the instant use.

Glo. I serve you, madam;
Your graces are right welcome.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II.

*Before Gloster's Castle.**Enter KENT and Steward, severally.*

Stew. Good dawning to thee, friend: Art of the house?

Kent. Ay.

Stew. Where may we set our horses?

Kent. I'the mire.

Stew. Prithee, if thou love me, tell me.

Kent. I love thee not.

Stew. Why, then I care not for thee.

Kent. If I had thee in Lipsbury pinfold, I would make thee care for me,

Stew. Why dost thou use me thus? I know thee not.

Kent. Fellow, I know thee.

Stew. What dost thou know me for?

Kent. A knave; a rascal, an eater of broken meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy worsted-stocking knave; a lily-liver'd, action taking-knave; a whore-son, glass-gazing, superserviceable, finical rogue; one-trunk-inheriting slave; one that wouldst be a bawd, in way of good-service, and art nothing but the composition of a knave, beggar, coward, pandar, and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch: one whom I will beat into clamorous whining, if thou deniest the least syllable of thy addition.

Stew. Why, what a monstrous fellow art thou, thus to rail on one, that is neither known of thee, nor knows thee?

Kent. What a brazen-faced varlet art thou, to deny thou knowst me? Is it two days ago, since I tripp'd up thy heels, and beat thee, before the king? Draw, you rogue; for, though it be night, the moon shines; I'll make a sop o'the moonshine of you: Draw, you whoreson cullionly barbermonger, draw. (*Drawing his sword.*)

Stew. Away; I have nothing to do with thee.

Kent. Draw, you rascal: you come with letters against the king; and take Vanity the puppet's part, against the royalty of her father: Draw,

you rogue, or I'll so carbonado your shanks: —
Draw, you rascal, come your ways.

Stew. Help, ho! murder! help!

Kent. Strike, you slave; stand, rogue, stand;
you neat slave, strike. (*Beating him.*)

Stew. Help, ho! murder! murder!

*Enter EDMUND, CORNWALL, REGAN,
GLOSTER, and Servants.*

Edm. How now? What's the matter? Part.

Kent. With you, Goodman boy, if you please;
come, I'll flesh you; come on, young master.

Glo. Weapons! arms! What's the matter here?

Corn. Keep peace, upon your lives;
He dies, that strikes again: What is the matter?

Reg. The messengers from our sister and the
king.

Corn. What is your difference? speak.

Stew. I am scarce in breath, my lord.

Kent. No marvel, you have so bestirr'd your
valor. You cowardly rascal, nature disclaims in
thee; a tailor made thee.

Corn. Thou art a strange fellow: a tailor
make a man?

Kent. Ay, a tailor, sir; a stone-cutter, or a
painter, could not have made him so ill, though
they had been but two hours at the trade.

Corn. Speak yet, how grew your quarrel?

Stew. This ancient ruffian, sir, whose life I
have spared,

At suit of his grey beard, —

Kent. Thou whoreson zed! thou unnecessary
letter! — My lord, if you will give me leave, I
will tread this unbolted villain into mortar, and
daub the wall of a jakes with him. — Spare my
grey beard, you wagtail?

Corn. Peace, sirrah!

You beastly knave, know you no reverence?

Kent. Yes, sir; but anger has a privilege.

Corn. Why art thou angry?

Kent. That such a slave as this should wear
a sword,

Who wears no honesty. Such smiling rogues as these,

Like rats, oft bite the holy cords atwain
Which are too intrinse t'unloose: smooth every
passion

That in the natures of their lords rebels;
Bring oil to fire, snow to their colder moods;
Renege, affirm, and turn their halcyon beaks
With every gale and vary of their masters,
As knowing nought, like dogs, but following. —
A plague upon your epileptic visage!

Smile you my speeches, as I were a fool?

Goose, if I had you upon Sarum plain,

I'd drive ye cackling home to Camelot.

Corn. What, art thou mad, old fellow?

Glo. How fell you out?

Say that.

Kent. No contraries hold more antipathy
Than I and such a knave.

Corn. Why dost thou call him knave? What's
his offence?

Kent. His countenance likes me not.

Corn. No more, perchance, does mine, or
his, or hers.

Kent. Sir, 'tis my occupation to be plain;
I have seen better faces in my time,
Than stands on any shoulder that I see
Before me at this instant.

Corn. This is some fellow,
Who, having been praised for bluntness, doth
affect

A saucy roughness; and constrains the garb,
Quite from his nature: He cannot flatter, he! —
An honest mind and plain, — he must speak
truth:

An they will take it, so: if not, he's plain.
These kind of knaves I know, which in this
plainness

Harbour more craft, and more corrupter ends,
Than twenty silly ducking observants,
That stretch their duties nicely.

Kent. Sir, in good sooth, in sincere verity,
Under the allowance of your grand aspect,
Whose influence, like the wreath of radiant fire
On flickering Phoebus, front, —

Corn. What meanst by this?

Kent. To go out of my dialect, which you discommend so much. I know, sir, I am no flatterer: he that beguiled you, in a plain accent, was a plain knave; which, for my part, I will not be, though I should win your displeasure to entreat me to it.

Corn. What was the offence you gave him?

Stew. Never any:

It pleased the king his master, very late,
To strike at me, upon his misconstruction;
When he, conjunct, and flattering his displeasure,
Tripp'd me behind; being down, insulted, rail'd,
And put upon him such a deal of man,
That worthied him, got praises of the king
For him attempting who was self-subdued;
And, in the fleshment of this dread exploit,
Drew on me here.

Kent. None of these rogues, and cowards,
But Ajax is their fool.

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks, ho!
You stubborn ancient knave, you reverend brag-
gart,

We'll teach you —

Kent. Sir, I am too old to learn:
Call not your stocks for me: I serve the king;
On whose employment I was sent to you:
You shall do small respect, show too bold malice
Against the grace and person of my master,
Stocking his messenger.

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks:
As I've life and honor, there shall he sit till noon.

Reg. Till noon! till night, my lord; and all
night too.

Kent. Why, madam, if I were your father's
dog,
You should not use me so.

Reg. Sir, being his knave, I will.

(Stocks brought out.)

Corn. This is a fellow of the self-same color
Our sister speaks of: — Come, bring away the
stocks.

Glo. Let me beseech your grace not to do so:
His fault is much, and the good king his master
Will check him for't: your purposed low correction

Is such, as basest and contemnedst wretches,
 For pilferings and most common trespasses,
 Are punish'd with: the king must take it ill,
 That he's so slightly valued in his messenger,
 Should have him thus restrain'd.

Corn.

I'll answer that.

Reg. My sister may receive it much more
 worse,

To have her gentleman abused, assaulted,
 For following her affairs. — Put in his legs. —

(KENT is put in the Stocks.)

Come, my good lord; away.

(Exeunt REGAN and CORNWALL.)

Glo. I am sorry for thee, friend; 'tis the duke's
 pleasure,
 Whose disposition, all the world well knows,
 Will not be rubb'd, nor stopp'd: I'll entreat
 for thee.

Kent. Pray, do not, sir: I have watch'd, and
 travell'd hard;
 Some time I shall sleep out, the rest I'll whistle.
 A good man's fortune may grow out at heels:
 Give you good morrow!

Glo. The duke's to blame in this; 'twill be ill
 taken. *(Exit.)*

Kent. Good king, that must approve the com-
 mon saw!

Thou out of heaven's benediction comest
 To the warm sun!

Approach, thou beacon to this under globe,
 That by thy comfortable beams I may
 Peruse this letter! — Nothing almost sees mira-
 cles,

But misery; — I know 'tis from Cordelia:
 Who hath most fortunately been inform'd
 Of my obscured course; and shall find time
 From this enormous state, — seeking to give
 Losses their remedies: — All weary and o'er-
 watch'd,

Take vantage, heavy eyes, not to behold
 This shameful lodging.

Fortune, good night; smile once more: turn thy
 wheel.

(He sleeps.)

SCENE III.

*A part of the Heath.**Enter EDGAR.*

Edg. I heard myself proclaim'd;
 And, by the happy hollow of a tree,
 Escaped the hunt. No port is free; no place,
 That guard, and most unusual vigilance,
 Does not attend my taking. While I may scape,
 I will preserve myself: and am bethought
 To take the basest and most poorest shape,
 That ever penury, in contempt of man,
 Brought near to beast: my face I'll grime with
 filth;

Blanket my loins; elf all my hair in knots;
 And with presented nakedness outface
 The winds, and persecutions of the sky.
 The country gives me proof and precedent
 Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voices,
 Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms
 Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary;
 And with this horrible object, from low farms,
 Poor pelting villages, sheep-cotes and mills,
 Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers,
 Enforce their charity. — Poor Turlygood! poor
 Tom!

That's something yet; — Edgar I nothing am.

(Exit.)

SCENE IV.

*Before Gloster's Castle.**Enter LEAR, Fool, and Gentleman.*

Lear. 'Tis strange, that they should so depart
 from home,
 And not send back my messenger.

Gent. As I learn'd,
 The night before there was no purpose in them
 Of this remove.

Kent. Hail to thee, noble master!

Lear. How!
 Makest thou this shame thy pastime?

*

Kent. No, my lord.

Fool. Ha, ha; look! he wears cruel garters! Horses are tied by the heads; dogs, and bears, by the neck; monkies by the loins, and men by the legs: when a man is over-lusty at legs, then he wears wooden nether-stocks.

Lear. What's he, that hath so much thy place mistook

To set thee here?

Kent. It is both he and she,
Your son and daughter.

Lear. No.

Kent. Yes.

Lear. No, I say.

Kent. I say, yea.

Lear. No, no; they would not.

Kent. Yes, they have.

Lear. By Jupiter, I swear, no.

Kent. By Juno, I swear, ay.

Lear. They durst not do't:

They could not, would not do't; 'tis worse than murder,

To do upon respect such violent outrage:

Resolve me, with all modest haste, which way
Thou mightst deserve, or they impose, this usage,
Coming from us.

Kent. My lord, when at their home
I did commend your highness' letters to them,
Ere I was risen from the place that show'd
My duty kneeling, came there a reeking post,
Stew'd in his haste, half breathless, panting forth
From Goneril his mistress, salutations;
Deliver'd letters, spite of intermission,
Which presently they read; on whose contents,
They summon'd up their meiny, straight took
horse;

Commanded me to follow, and attend
The leisure of their answer; gave me cold looks:
And meeting here the other messenger,
Whose welcome, I perceived, had poison'd mine,
(Being the very fellow that of late
Display'd so saucily against your highness,)
Having more man than wit about me, drew;
He raised the house with loud and coward cries:

Your son and daughter found this trespass worth
The shame which here it suffers.

Fool. Winter's not gone yet, if the wild geese
fly that way.

Fathers, that wear rags,
Do make their children blind:
But fathers, that bear bags,
Shall see their children kind.

Fortune, that arrant whore,
Ne'er turns the key to the poor.

But, for all this, thou shalt have as many dolours
for thy daughters, as thou canst tell in a year.

Lear. O, how this mother swells up toward
my heart!

Hysterica passio! down, thou climbing sorrow,
Thy element's below! — Where is this daughter?

Kent. With the earl, sir, here within.

Lear. Follow me not;

Stay here. (*Exit.*)

Gent. Made you no more offence than what
you speak of?

Kent. None.

How chance the king comes with so small a train?

Fool. An thou hadst been set i'the stocks for
that question, thou hadst well deserved it.

Kent. Why, fool?

Fool. We'll set thee to school to an ant, to
teach thee there's no labouring in the winter. All
that follow their noses are led by their eyes, but
blind men; and there's not a nose among twenty,
but can smell him that's stinking. Let go thy
hold, when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest
it break thy neck with following it; but the great
one that goes up the hill, let him draw thee after.
When a wise man gives thee better counsel, give
me mine again: I would have none but knaves
follow it, since a fool gives it.

That, sir, which serves and seeks for
gain,

And follows but for form,
Will pack, when it begins to rain,
And leave thee in the storm.

But I will tarry, the fool will stay,
And let the wise man fly:

The knave turns fool, that runs away;
The fool no knave, perdy.

Kent. Where learn'd you this, fool?

Fool. Not i'the stock's, fool.

Re-enter LEAR, with GLOSTER.

Lear. Deny to speak with me? They are sick?
they are weary?

They have travell'd hard to-night? Mere fetches;
The images of revolt and flying off!

Fetch me a better answer.

Glo. My dear lord,
You know the fiery quality of the duke;
How unremoveable and fix'd he is
In his own course.

Lear. Vengeance! plague! death! confusion! —
Fiery? what quality? Why Gloster, Gloster,
I'd speak with the duke of Cornwall, and his wife.

Glo. Well, my good lord, I have inform'd
them so.

Lear. Inform'd them! Dost thou understand
me, man?

Glo. Ay, my good lord.

Lear. The king would speak with Cornwall;
the dear father

Would with his daughter speak, commands her
service:

Are they inform'd of this? — — My breath and
blood! —

Fiery? the fiery duke? — Tell the hot duke, that —
No, but not yet: — may be, he is not well:

Infirmity doth still neglect all office,
Whereto our health is bound; we are not our-
selves,

When nature, being oppress'd, commands the
mind

To suffer with the body: I'll forbear;
And am fallen out with my more headier will,
To take the indisposed and sickly fit
For the sound man. — Death on my state! where-
fore (*Looking on KENT.*)

Should he sit here? This act persuades me,
That this remotion of the duke and her
Is practice only. Give me my servant forth:

Go, tell the duke and his wife, I'd speak with them

Now, presently: bid them come forth and hear me,
Or at their chamber door I'll beat the drum,
Till it cry — *Sleep to death.*

Glo. I'd have all well betwixt you. (*Exit.*)

Lear. O me, my heart, my rising heart! —
but, down.

Fool. Cry to it, nuncle, as the cockney did to
the eels, when she put them i'the paste alive; she
rapp'd 'em o'the coxcombs with a stick, and cry'd,
Down, wantons, down: 'Twas her brother, that
in pure kindness to his horse, butter'd the hay.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOSTER,
and Servants.

Lear. Good morrow to you both.

Corn. Hail to your grace!

(*KENT is set at liberty.*)

Reg. I am glad to see your highness.

Lear. Regan, I think you are; I know what
reason

I have to think so: if thou shouldst not be glad,
I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb,
Sepulchring an adultress. — O, are you free?

(*To KENT.*)

Some other time for that. — Beloved Regan,
Thy sister's naught: O Regan, she hath tied
Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here, —

(*Points to his heart.*)

I can scarce speak to thee; thou'lt not believe,
Of how depraved a quality — — O Regan!

Reg. I pray you, sir, take patience; I have
hope,
You less know how to value her desert,
Than she to scant her duty.

Lear. Say, how is that?

Reg. I cannot think, my sister in the least
Would fail her obligation: If, sir, perchance,
She have restrain'd the riots of your followers,
'Tis on such ground, and to such wholesome end,
As clears her from all blame.

Lear. My curses on her!

Reg. O, sir, you are old:
Nature in you stands on the very verge
Of her confine: you should be ruled, and led
By some discretion, that discerns your state
Better than you yourself: Therefore, I pray you,
That to our sister you do make return;
Say, you have wrong'd her, sir.

Lear. Ask her forgiveness?
Do you but mark how this becomes the house:
*Dear daughter, I confess that I am old;
Age is unnecessary: on my knees I beg.*

(Kneeling.)

That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food.

Reg. Good sir, no more; these are unsightly
tricks:

Return you to my sister.

Lear. Never, Regan:
She hath abated me of half my train;
Look'd black upon me: struck me with her tongue,
Most serpent-like, upon the very heart: —
All the stored vengeance of heaven fall
On her ingrateful top! Strike her young bones,
You taking airs, with lameness!

Corn.

Fie, fie, fie!

Lear. You nimble lightnings, dart your blind-
ing flames
Into her scornful eyes! Infect her beauty,
You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the powerful sun,
To fall and blast her pride!

Reg.

O the blest gods!
So will you wish on me, when the rash mood's on.

Lear. No, Regan, thou shalt never have my
curse;

Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give
Thee o'er to harshness; her eyes are fierce, but thine
Do comfort, and not burn: 'Tis not in thee
To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train,
To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,
And, in conclusion, to oppose the bolt
Against my coming in: thou better knowst
The offices of nature, bond of childhood,
Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude;
Thy half o'the kingdom hast thou not forgot,
Wherein I thee endow'd.

Reg. Good sir, to the purpose.

(Trumpets within.)

Lear. Who put my man i'the stocks?

Corn. What trumpet's that?

Enter Steward.

Reg. I know't, my sister's; this approves her letter,
That she would soon be here. — Is your lady come?

Lear. This is a slave, whose easy-borrow'd pride
Dwells in the fickle grace of her he follows: —
Out, varlet, from my sight!

Corn. What means your grace?

Lear. Who stock'd my servant? Regan, I have
good hope
Thou didst not know of't. — Who comes here?
O heavens,

Enter GONERIL.

If you do love old men, if your sweet sway
Allow obedience, if yourselves are old,
Make it your cause; send down, and take my
part! —

Art not ashamed to look upon this beard? —

(To GONERIL.)

O, Regan, wilt thou take her by the hand?

Gon. Why not by the hand, sir? How have
I offended?

All's not offence, that indiscretion finds,
And dotage terms so.

Lear. O, sides, you are too tough!
Will you yet hold? — How came my man i'the
stocks?

Corn. I set him there, sir: but his own dis-
orders
Deserved much less advancement.

Lear. You! did you?

Reg. I pray you, father, being weak, seem so.
If, till the expiration of your month,
You will return and sojourn with my sister,
Dismissing half your train, come then to me;

I am now from home, and out of that provision
Which shall be needful for your entertainment.

Lear. Return to her, and fifty men dismiss'd?
No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose
To wage against the enmity o'the air;
To be a comrade with the wolf and owl, —
Necessity's sharp pinch! — Return with her?
Why, the hot-blooded France, that dowerless took
Our youngest born, I could as well be brought
To knee his throne, and, squire-like, pension beg
To keep base life afoot: — Return with her?
Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter
To this detested groom.

(Looking on the Steward.)

Gon. At your choice, sir.

Lear. I prithee, daughter, do not make me
mad;

I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell:
We'll no more meet, no more see one another: —
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter;
Or rather, a disease that's in my flesh,
Which I must needs call mine: thou art a boil,
A plague-sore, an embossed carbuncle,
In my corrupted blood. But I'll not chide thee;
Let shame come when it will, I do not call it:
I do not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,
Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove:
Mend, when thou canst; be better at thy leisure:
I can be patient; I can stay with Regan,
I, and my hundred knights.

Reg. Not altogether so, sir;
I look'd not for you yet, nor am provided
For your fit welcome: Give ear, sir, to my sister;
For those that mingle reason with your passion,
Must be content to think you old, and so —
But she knows what she does.

Lear. Is this well spoken now?

Reg. I dare avouch it, sir: What, fifty fol-
lowers?

Is it not well? What should you need of more?
Yea, or so many? sith that both charge and
danger
Speak 'gainst so great a number? How, in one
house,

Should many people, under two commands,
Hold amity? 'Tis hard; almost impossible.

Gon. Why might not you, my lord, receive
attendance
From those that she calls servants, or from mine?

Reg. Why not, my lord? If then they chanced
to slack you,
We could control them: If you will come to me,
(For now I spy a danger,) I entreat you
To bring but five and twenty; to no more
Will I give place or notice.

Lear. I gave you all —

Reg. And in good time you gave it.

Lear. Made you my guardians, my deposi-
taries;
But kept a reservation to be follow'd
With such a number: What, must I come to you
With five and twenty, Regan? said you so?
Reg. And speak it again, my lord; no more
with me.

Lear. Those wicked creatures yet do look well
favor'd,
When others are more wicked; not being the worst,
Stands in some rank of praise: — I'll go with
thee: (*To GONERIL.*)

Thy fifty yet doth double five and twenty,
And thou art twice her love.

Gon. Hear me, my lord;
What need you five and twenty, ten, or five,
To follow in a house, where twice so many
Have a command to tend you?

Reg. What need one?

Lear. O, reason not the need: our basest
beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous:
Allow not nature more than nature needs,
Man's life is cheap as beast's: thou art a lady;
If only to go warm were gorgeous,
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,
Which scarcely keeps thee warm. — But, for true
need, —

You heavens, give me that patience, patience I
need!

You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,

As full of grief as age; wretched in both!
 If it be you that stir these daughters' hearts
 Against their father, fool me not so much
 To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger!
 O, let not women's weapons, water-drops,
 Stain my man's cheek's! — No, you unnatural
 hags,

I will have such revenges on you both,
 That all the world shall — I will do such things, —
 What they are, yet I know not; but they shall be
 The terrors of the earth. You think, I'll weep;
 No, I'll not weep: —

I have full cause of weeping; but this heart
 Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,
 Or ere I'll weep: — O, fool, I shall go mad!

(Exeunt LEAR, GLOSTER, KENT, and Fool.)

Corn. Let us withdraw, 'twill be a storm.

(Storm heard at a distance.)

Reg. This house
 Is little; the old man and his people cannot
 Be well bestow'd.

Gon. 'Tis his own blame; he hath put
 Himself from rest, and must needs taste his folly.

Reg. For his particular, I'll receive him gladly,
 But not one follower.

Gon. So am I purposed.
 Where is my lord of Gloster?

Re-enter GLOSTER.

Corn. Follow'd the old man forth: — he is
 return'd.

Glo. The king is in high rage.

Corn.. Whither is he going!

Glo. He calls to horse; but will I know not
 whither.

Corn. 'Tis best to give him way; he leads
 himself.

Gon. My lord, entreat him by no means to
 stay.

Glo. Alack, the night comes on, and the bleak
 winds

Do sorely ruffle; for many miles about
 There's scarce a bush.

Reg. O, sir, to wilful men,

The injuries, that they themselves procure,
Must be their schoolmasters: Shut up your doors;
He is attended with a desperate train;
And what they may incense him to, being apt
To have his ear abused, wisdom bids fear.

Corn. Shut up your doors, my lord: 'tis a
wild night;
My Regan counsels well; come out o'the storm.

(*Exeunt.*)

~~~~~

## A C T III.

### SCENE I.

*A Heath. A Storm is heard, with Thunder and Lightning.*

*Enter KENT and a Gentleman, meeting.*

*Kent.* Who's here, beside foul weather?

*Gent.* One minded like the weather, most  
unquietly.

*Kent.* I know you: Where's the king?

*Gent.* Contending with the fretful element:  
Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,  
Or swell the curled waters 'bove the main,  
That things might change or cease: tears his  
white hair;

Which the impetuous blasts, with eyeless rage,  
Catch in their fury, and make nothing of:  
Strives in his little world of man to out-scorn  
The to-and-fro conflicting wind and rain.  
This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear would  
couch,

The lion and the belly-pinched wolf  
Keep their fur dry, unbonneted he runs,  
And bids what will take all.

*Kent.* But who is with him?

*Gent.* None but the fool; who labors to out-jest  
His heart-struck injuries.



*Kent.* Sir, I do know you;  
 And dare upon the warrant of my art,  
 Commend a dear thing to you. There is divi-  
 sion,  
 Although as yet the face of it be cover'd  
 With mutual cunning, 'twixt Albany and Corn-  
 wall;  
 Who have (as who have not, that their great stars  
 Throned and set high?) servants, who seem no  
 less;

Which are to France the spies and speculations  
 Intelligent of our state; what hath been seen,  
 Either in snuffs and packings of the dukes;  
 Or the hard rein which both of them have borne  
 Against the old kind king; or something deeper,  
 Whereof, perchance, these are but furnishings, —  
 But, true it is, from France there comes a power  
 Into this scatter'd kingdom; who already,  
 Wise in our negligence, have secret feet  
 In some of our best ports, and are at point  
 To show their open banner. — Now to you:  
 If on my credit you dare build so far  
 To make your speed to Dover, you shall find  
 Some that will thank you, making just report  
 Of how unnatural and bemadding sorrow  
 The king hath cause to 'plain.  
 I am a gentleman of blood and breeding;  
 And, from some knowledge and assurance, offer  
 This office to you.

*Gent.* I will talk further with you.

*Kent.* No, do not.

For confirmation that I am much more  
 Than my out wall, open this purse, and take  
 What it contains: If you shall see Cordelia,  
 (As fear not but you shall,) show her this ring;  
 And she will tell you who your fellow is,  
 That yet you do not know. Fie on this storm!  
 I will go seek the king.

*Gent.* Give me your hand: Have you no more  
 to say?

*Kent.* Few words, but, to effect, more than  
 all yet;

That, when we have found the king, (in which  
 your pain



That way; I'll this;) he that first lights on him,  
Holla the other. (*Exeunt severally.*)

## SCENE II.

*Another Part of the Heath. Storm continues.*

*Enter LEAR and Fool.*

*Lear.* Blow, wind, and crack your cheeks!  
rage! blow!

You cataracts, and hurricanoes, spout  
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the  
cocks!

You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,  
Vaunt couriers to oak-cleaving thunder-bolts,  
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking  
thunder,

Strike flat the thick rotundity o'the world!  
Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once,  
That make ingrateful man!

*Fool.* O nuncle, court holy water in a dry  
house is better than this rain-water out o'door.  
Good nuncle, in, and ask thy daughter's blessing!  
Here's a night pities neither wise men nor fools.

*Lear.* Rumble thy bellyfull! Spit, fire! spout,  
rain!

Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters;  
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness,  
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,  
You owe me no subscription; why then let fall  
Your horrible pleasure; here I stand, your slave,  
A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man: —  
But yet I call you servile ministers,  
That have with two pernicious daughters join'd  
Your high engender'd battles, 'gainst a head  
So old and white as this. O! O! 'tis foul!

*Fool.* He that has a house to put his head in,  
has a good head-piece.

*The cod-piece, that will house,*

*Before the head has any,*

*The head and he shall louse; —*

*So beggars marry many.*

*The man that makes his toe*

*What he his heart should make,*



*Shall of a corn cry woe,  
And turn his sleep to wake.*

— for there was never yet fair woman, but she made mouths in a glass.

*Enter KENT.*

*Lear.* No, I will be the pattern of all patience, I will say nothing.

*Kent.* Who's there?

*Fool.* Marry, here's grace, and a cod-piece; that's a wise man, and a fool.

*Kent.* Alas! sir, are you here? things that love night,

Love not such nights as these; the wrathful skies Gallow the very wanderers of the dark,

And make them keep their caves: Since I was man,

Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder, Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never

Remember to have heard: man's nature cannot carry

The affliction, nor the fear.

*Lear.* Let the great gods, That keep this dreadful pother o'er our heads,

Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch,

That hast within thee undivulged crimes, Unwhipp'd of justice: Hide thee, thou bloody hand;

Thou perjured, and thou simular man of virtue, That art incestuous: Caitiff, to pieces shake,

That under covert and convenient seeming Hast practised on man's life! — Close pent-up

guilts, Rive your concealing continents, and cry

These dreadful summoners grace. — I am a man, More sinn'd against, than sinning.

*Kent.* Alack, bare-headed! Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel:

Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the tempest;

Repose you there: while I to this hard house, (More hard than is the stone whereof 'tis raised;

Which even but now, demanding after you,



Denied me to come in,) return, and force  
Their scantred courtesy.

*Lear.* My wits begin to turn. —  
Come on, my boy: How dost, my boy? Art cold?  
I am cold myself. — Where is this straw, my  
fellow?

The art of our necessities is strange,  
That can make vile things precious. Come, your  
hovel,

Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart  
That's sorry yet for thee.

*Fool.* *He that has a little tiny wit, —  
With heigh ho, the wind and the  
rain, —  
Must make content with his fortunes  
fit;*

*For the rain it raineth every day.*

*Lear.* True, my good boy. — Come, bring us  
to this hovel. (*Exeunt LEAR and KENT.*)

*Fool.* This is a brave night to cool a cour-  
tezan. — I'll speak a prophecy ere I go:

When priests are more in word than matter;

When brewers mar their malt with water;

When nobles are their tailors' tutors;

No heretics burn'd, but wenches' suitors:

When every case in law is right;

No squire in debt, nor no poor knight;

When slanders do not live in tongues;

Nor cutpurses come not to throngs;

When usurers tell their gold i'the field;

And bawds and whores do churches build: —

Then shall the realm of Albion

Come to great confusion.

Then comes the time, who lives to see't,

That going shall be used with feet.

This prophecy Merlin shall make; for I live before  
his time. (*Exit.*)

### SCENE III.

*A Room in Gloster's Castle.*

*Enter GLOSTER and EDMUND.*

*Glo.* Alack, alack, Edmund, I like not this  
unnatural dealing: When I desired their leave



that I might pity him, they took from me the use of mine own house; charged me, on pain of their perpetual displeasure, neither to speak of him, entreat for him, nor any way sustain him.

*Edm.* Most savage, and unnatural!

*Glo.* Go to; say you nothing: There is division between the dukes; and a worse matter than that: I have received a letter this night: — I have locked the letter in my closet: these injuries the king now bears will be revenged home; there is part of a power already footed: we must incline to the king. I will seek him, and privily relieve him: go you, and maintain talk with the duke, that my charity be not of him perceived: If he ask for me, I am ill, and gone to bed. If I die for it, as no less is threatened me, the king my old master must be relieved. There is some strange thing toward, Edmund; pray you, be careful. (*Exit.*)

*Edm.* This courtesy, forbid thee, shall the duke

Instantly know; and of that letter too: —

This seems a fair deserving, and must draw me  
That which my father loses; no less than all:  
The younger rises, when the old doth fall.

(*Exit.*)

#### SCENE IV.

*A Part of the Heath, with a Hovel.*

*Enter* LEAR, KENT, *and* Fool.

*Kent.* Here is the place, my lord; good my lord, enter:

The tyranny of the open night's too rough  
For nature to endure. (*Storm still.*)

*Lear.* Let me alone.

*Kent.* Good my lord, enter here.

*Lear.* Wilt break my heart?

*Kent.* I'd rather break mine own: Good my lord, enter.

*Lear.* Thou thinkst 'tis much, that this contentious storm

Invades us to the skin: so 'tis to thee;



But where the greater malady is fix'd,  
The lesser is scarce felt. Thoud'st shun a bear:  
But if thy flight lay toward the raging sea,  
Thoud'st meet the bear i'the mouth. When the  
mind's free,

The body's delicate: the tempest in my mind  
Doth from my senses take all feeling else,  
Save what beats there. — Filial ingratitude!  
Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand,  
For lifting food to't? — But I will punish home:  
No, I will weep no more. — In such a night  
To shut me out! — Pour on! I will endure: —  
In such a night as this! O Regan, Goneril! —  
Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave  
all, —

O, that way madness lies; let me shun that;  
No more of that, —

*Kent.* Good my lord, enter here.

*Lear.* Prithee, go in thyself; seek thine own  
ease;

This tempest will not give me leave to ponder  
On things would hurt me more. — But I'll go  
in:

In, boy; go first. — (*To the Fool.*) You houseless  
poverty, —

Nay, get thee in. I'll pray, and then I'll sleep.  
(*Fool goes in.*)

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,  
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,  
How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,  
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you  
From seasons, such as these? O, I have ta'en  
Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;  
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel;  
That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,  
And show the heavens more just.

*Edg. (Within.)* Fathom and half, fathom and half!  
Poor Tom!

(*The Fool runs out from the Hovel.*)

*Fool.* Come not in here, nuncle, here's a spirit.  
Help me, help me!

*Kent.* Give me thy hand. — Who's there?

*Fool.* A spirit, a spirit; he says his name's  
poor Tom.



*Kent.* What art thou that dost grumble there  
i'the straw?  
Come forth.

*Enter EDGAR, disguised as a Madman.*

*Edg.* Away! the foul fiend follows me; —  
Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind. —  
Humph! go to thy cold bed, and warm thee.

*Lear.* Hast thou given all to thy two daughters?  
And art thou come to this?

*Edg.* Who gives any thing to poor Tom?  
whom the foul fiend hath led through fire and  
through flame, through ford and whirlpool, over  
bog and quagmire; that hath laid knives under  
his pillow, and halters in his pew; set ratsbane  
by his porridge; made him proud of heart, to ride  
on a bay trotting-horse over four-inched bridges,  
to course his own shadow for a traitor: — Bless  
thy five wits! Tom's a-cold. — O, do de, do de,  
do de. — Bless thee from whirlwinds, star-blasting,  
and taking! Do poor Tom some charity, whom  
the foul fiend vexes: There could I have him  
now, — and there, — and there again, and there.

*(Storm continues.)*

*Lear.* What, have his daughters brought him  
to this pass? —  
Couldst thou save nothing? Didst thou give them  
all?

*Fool.* Nay, he reserved a blanket, else we had  
been all shamed.

*Lear.* Now, all the plagues that in the pen-  
dulous air  
Hang fated o'er men's faults, light on thy daughters!

*Kent.* He hath no daughters, sir.

*Lear.* Death, traitor! nothing could have sub-  
dued nature

To such a lowness, but his unkind daughters. —  
Is the fashion, that discarded fathers  
Should have thus little mercy on their flesh?  
Judicious punishment! 'twas this flesh begot  
Those pelican daughters.

*Edg.* Pillicock sat on pillicock's-hill; —  
Halloo, halloo, loo, loo!



*Fool.* This cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen.

*Edg.* Take heed o'the foul fiend: Obey thy parents; keep thy word justly; swear not; commit not with man's sworn spouse; set not thy sweet heart on proud array: Tom's a-cold.

*Lear.* What hast thou been?

*Edg.* A serving-man, proud in heart and mind; that curled my hair; wore gloves in my cap, served the lust of my mistress's heart, and did the act of darkness with her; swore as many oaths as I spake words, and broke them in the sweet face of heaven; one, that slept in the contriving of lust, and waked to do it: Wine loved I deeply; dice dearly; and in woman, outparamoured the Turk: False of heart, light of ear, bloody of hand: Hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey. Let not the creaking of shoes, nor the rustling of silks, betray thy poor heart to women: Keep thy foot out of brothels, thy hand out of plackets, thy pen from lenders' books, and defy the foul fiend. — Still through the hawthorn blows the cold wind: Says suum, mun, ha no nonny, dolphin my boy, my boy, sessa; let him trot by.

*(Storm continues.)*

*Lear.* Why, thou were better in thy grave, than to answer with thy uncover'd body this extremity of the skies. — Is man no more than this? Consider him well: Thou owest the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume: — Ha! here's three of us are sophisticated! — Thou art the thing itself: unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art. — Off, off, you lendings: — Come, unbutton here.

*(Tearing off his clothes.)*

*Fool.* Prithee, nuncle, be contented; this is a naughty night to swim in. — Now a little fire in a wild field were like an old lecher's heart; a small spark, all the rest of his body cold. — Look, here comes a walking fire.

*Edg.* This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet: he begins at curfew, and walks till the first cock;

clock;

up? : clock?

clock: : clock:



he gives the web and the pin, squints the eye,  
and makes the hare-lip; mildews the white wheat,  
and hurts the poor creature of earth.

*Saint Withold footed thrice the wold;  
He met the night-mare, and her nine-fold;  
Bit her alight,  
And her troth plight,  
And, aroint thee, witch, aroint thee!*

*Kent.* How fares your grace?

*Enter GLOSTER, with a Torch.*

*Lear.* What's he?

*Kent.* Who's there? What is't you seek?

*Glo.* What are you there? Your names?

*Edg.* Poor Tom, that eats the swimming frog,  
the toad, the tadpole, the wall-newt, and the water;  
that in the fury of his heart, when the foul fiend  
rages, eats cow-dung for sallets; swallows the old  
rat, and the ditch-dog; drinks the green mantle  
of the standing pool; who is whipped from tything  
to tything, and stocked, punished, and imprisoned;  
who hath had three suits to his back, six shirts  
to his body, horse to ride, and weapon to wear, —

*But mice and rats, and such small deer,  
Have been Tom's food for seven long year.*

Beware my follower: — Peace, Smolkin; peace,  
thou fiend!

*Glo.* What, hath your grace no better com-  
pany?

*Edg.* The prince of darkness is a gentleman;  
Modo he's call'd, and Mahu.

*Glo.* Our flesh and blood, my lord, is grown  
so vile,

That it doth hate what gets it.

*Edg.* Poor Tom's a-cold.

*Glo.* Go in with me; my duty cannot suffer  
To obey in all your daughters' hard commands;  
Though their injunction be to bar my doors,  
And let this tyrannous night take hold upon you;  
Yet have I ventured to come seek you out,  
And bring you where both fire and food is ready.



*Lear.* First let me talk with this philosopher: —  
What is the cause of thunder?

*Kent.* Good my lord, take his offer;  
Go into the house.

*Lear.* I'll talk a word with this same learned  
Theban:  
What is your study?

*Edg.* How to prevent the fiend, and to kill  
vermin.

*Lear.* Let me ask you one word in private.

*Kent.* Impórtune him once more to go, my  
lord.

His wits begin to unsettle.

*Glo.* Canst thou blame him?  
His daughters seek his death: — Ah, that good  
Kent! —

He said it would be thus: — Poor banish'd man! —  
Thou sayst the king grows mad; I'll tell thee  
friend,

I am almost mad myself; I had a son,  
Now outlaw'd from my blood; he sought my life,  
But lately, very late; I loved him, friend, —  
No father his son dearer: true to tell thee,

*(Storm continues.)*

The grief hath crazed my wits. What a night's  
this!

I do beseech your grace, —

*Lear.* O, cry you mercy,  
Noble philosopher, your company.

*Edg.* Tom's a-cold.

*Glo.* In, fellow, there, to the hovel; keep thee  
warm.

*Lear.* Come, let's in all.

*Kent.* This way, my lord.

*Lear.* With him;  
I will keep still with my philosopher.

*Kent.* Good my lord, sooth him; let him take  
the fellow.

*Glo.* Take him you on.

*Kent.* Sirrah, come on; go along with us.

*Lear.* Come, good Athenian.

*Glo.* No words, no words;

Hush.

*Edg.* *Child Rowland to the dark tower came,*



*His word was still, — Fie, foh, and fum,  
I smell the blood of a British man.*

*(Exeunt.)*

## SCENE V.

*A Room in Gloster's Castle.*

*Enter CORNWALL and EDMUND.*

*Corn.* I will have my revenge, ere I depart his house.

*Edm.* How, my lord, I may be censured, that nature thus gives way to loyalty, something fears me to think of.

*Corn.* I now perceive, it was not altogether your brother's evil disposition made him seek his death; but a provoking merit, set a-work by a reproveable badness in himself.

*Edm.* How malicious is my fortune, that I must repent to be just! This is the letter he spoke of, which approves him an intelligent party to the advantages of France. O heavens! that this treason were not, or not I the detector!

*Corn.* Go with me to the duchess.

*Edm.* If the matter of this paper be certain, you have mighty business in hand.

*Corn.* True, or false, it hath made thee earl of Gloster. Seek out where thy father is, that he may be ready for our apprehension.

*Edm. (Aside.)* If I find him comforting the king, it will stuff his suspicion more fully. — I will persevere in my course of loyalty, though the conflict be sore between that and my blood.

*Corn.* I will lay trust upon thee; and thou shalt find a dearer father in my love. *(Exeunt.)*

## SCENE VI.

*A Chamber in a Farm-House, adjoining the Castle.*

*Enter GLOSTER, LEAR, KENT, Fool,  
and EDGAR.*

*Glo.* Here is better than the open air; take it thankfully: I will piece out the comfort with what addition I can: I will not be long from you.



*Kent.* All the power of his wits has given way to his impatience: — The gods reward your kindness! (*Exit GLOSTER.*)

*Edg.* Frateretto calls me; and tells me, Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness. Pray, innocent, and beware the foul fiend.

*Fool.* Prithee, nuncle, tell me, whether a madman be a gentleman, or a yeoman?

*Lear.* A king, a king!

*Fool.* No; he's a yeoman, that has a gentleman to his son: for he's a mad yeoman, that sees his son a gentleman before him.

*Lear.* To have a thousand with red burning spits Come hissing in upon them: —

*Edg.* The foul fiend bites my back.

*Fool.* He's mad, that trusts in the tameness of a wolf, a horse's health, a boy's love, or a whore's oath.

*Lear.* It shall be done, I will arraign them straight: —

Come, sit thou here, most learned justicer: —

(*To EDGAR.*)

Thou, sapient sir, sit here. (*To the Fool.*) —

Now, you she foxes! —

*Edg.* Look, where he stands and glares! — Wantest thou eyes at trial, madam?

*Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me: —*

*Fool.* *Her boat hath a leak,  
And she must not speak*

*Why she dares not come over to thee.*

*Edg.* The foul fiend haunts poor Tom in the voice of a nightingale. *Hopdance* cries in Tom's belly for two white herrings. Croak not, black angel; I have no food for thee.

*Kent.* How do you, sir? Stand you not so amazed:

Will you lie down and rest upon the cushions?

*Lear.* I'll see their trial first: — Bring in the evidence. —

Thou robed man of justice, take thy place;

(*To EDGAR.*)

And thou, his yoke-fellow of equity,

(*To the Fool.*)



Bench by his side: — You are of the commission,  
Sit you too. (*To KENT.*)

*Edg.* Let us deal justly.

*Sleepest, or wakest thou, jolly shepherd?  
Thy sheep be in the corn;  
And for one blast of thy minikin mouth,  
Thy sheep shall take no harm.*

*Pur!* the cat is grey.

*Lear.* Arraign her first; 'tis Goneril. I here  
take my oath before this honorable assembly, she  
kicked the poor king her father.

*Fool.* Come hither, mistress; Is your name  
Goneril?

*Lear.* She cannot deny it.

*Fool.* Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint-  
stool.

*Lear.* And here's another, whose warp'd looks  
proclaim  
What store her heart is made of. — Stop her,  
there?

Arms, arms, sword, fire! — Corruption in the  
place! False justicer, why hast thou let her 'scape?

*Edg.* Bless thy five wits!

*Kent.* O pity! — Sir, where is the patience now,  
That you so oft have boasted to retain?

*Edg.* My tears begin to take his part so much,  
They'll mar my counterfeiting. (*Aside.*)

*Lear.* The little dogs and all,  
Tray, Blanch, and Sweet-heart, see, they bark  
at me.

*Edg.* Tom will throw his head at them: —  
Avaunt, you curs!

By thy mouth or black or white,  
Tooth that poisons if it bite;  
Mastiff, grey-hound, mongrel grim,  
Hound, or spaniel, brach, or lym;  
Or bobtail tike, or trundle-tail;  
Tom will make them weep and wail;  
For, with throwing thus my head,  
Dogs leap the hatch, and all are fled.

Do de, de de. Sessa. Come, march to wakes and  
fairs, and market-towns: — Poor Tom, thy horn  
is dry.



*Lear.* Then let them anatomize Regan, see what breeds about her heart: Is there any cause in nature, that makes these hard hearts? — You, sir, I entertain you for one of my hundred; only, I do not like the fashion of your garments: you will say, they are Persian attire! but let them be changed. *(To EDGAR.)*

*Kent.* Now, good my lord, lie here, and rest awhile.

*Lear.* Make no noise, make no noise; draw the curtains: So, so, so: We'll go to supper i'the morning: So, so, so.

*Fool.* And I'll go to bed at noon.

*Re-enter GLOSTER.*

*Glo.* Come hither, friend: Where is the king my master?

*Kent.* Here, sir; but trouble him not, his wits are gone.

*Glo.* Good friend, I prithee take him in thy arms;

I have o'erheard a plot of death upon him:  
There is a litter ready; lay him in't,  
And drive toward Dover, friend, where thou shalt meet

Both welcome and protection. Take up thy master:  
If thou shouldst dally half an hour, his life,  
With thine, and all that offer to defend him,  
Stand in assured loss: Take up, take up;  
And follow me, that will to some provision  
Give thee quick conduct.

*Kent.* Oppress'd nature sleeps: —  
This rest might yet have balm'd thy broken senses,  
Which, if convenience will not allow,  
Stand in hard cure. — Come, help to bear thy master;

Thou must not stay behind. *(To the Fool.)*

*Glo.* Come, come, away.

*(Exeunt KENT, GLOSTER, and the Fool, bearing off the King.)*

*Edg.* When we our betters see bearing our woes,

We scarcely think our miseries our foes.  
Who alone suffers, suffers most i'the mind;  
Leaving free things, and happy shows, behind:



But then the mind much sufferance doth o'erskip,  
 When grief hath mates, and bearing fellowship.  
 How light and portable my pain seems now,  
 When that, which makes me bend, makes the  
                   king bow;

He childed, as I father'd! — Tom, away:  
 Mark the high noises; and thyself bewray,  
 When false opinion, whose wrong thought defiles  
                   thee,

In thy just proof, repeals, and reconciles thee.  
 What will hap more to-night, safe scape the king!  
 Lurk, lurk. (*Exit.*)

## SCENE VII.

*A Room in Gloster's Castle.*

*Enter* CORNWALL, REGAN, GONERIL,  
 EDMUND, *and* Servants.

*Corn.* Post speedily to my lord your husband;  
 show him this letter; the army of France is lan-  
 ded: — Seek out the villain Gloster.

(*Exeunt some of the Servants.*)

*Reg.* Hang him instantly.

*Gon.* Pluck out his eyes.

*Corn.* Leave him to my displeasure. — Ed-  
 mund, keep you our sister company; the revenges  
 we are bound to take upon your traitorous father,  
 are not fit for your beholding. Advise the duke,  
 where you are going, to a most festinate prepa-  
 ration; we are bound to the like. Our posts shall  
 be swift, and intelligent betwixt us. Farewell,  
 dear sister; — farewell, my lord of Gloster.

*Enter* Steward.

How now? Where's the king?

*Stew.* My lord of Gloster hath convey'd him  
 hence:

Some five or six and thirty of his knights,  
 Hot questrists after him, met him at the gate;  
 Who, with some other of the lord's dependants,  
 Are gone with him towards Dover; where they  
                   boast

To have weil-arm'd friends.



*Corn.* Get horses for your mistress.

*Gon.* Farewell, sweet lord and sister.

*(Exeunt GONERIL and EDMUND.)*

*Corn.* Edmund, farewell. Go, seek the traitor  
Gloster,

Pinion him like a thief; bring him before us:

*(Exeunt other Servants.)*

Though well we may not pass upon his life  
Without the form of justice; yet our power  
Shall do a courtesy to our wrath, which men  
May blame, but not control. Who's there? The  
traitor?

*Re-enter Servants, with GLOSTER.*

*Reg.* Ingrateful fox! 'tis he.

*Corn.* Bind fast his corky arms.

*Glo.* What mean your graces? — — Good my  
friends, consider

You are my guests: do me no foul play, friends.

*Corn.* Bind him, I say. *(Servants bind him.)*

*Reg.* Hard, hard: — O filthy traitor.

*Glo.* Unmerciful lady as you are, I am none.

*Corn.* To this chair bind him: — Villain, thou  
shalt find — *(REGAN plucks his beard.)*

*Glo.* By the kind gods, 'tis most ignobly done  
To pluck me by the beard.

*Reg.* So white, and such a traitor.

*Glo.* Naughty lady,  
These hairs, which thou dost ravish from my chin,  
Will quicken, and accuse thee: I am your host;  
With robbers' hands, my hospitable favors  
You should not ruffle thus. What will you do?

*Corn.* Come, sir, what letters had you late  
from France?

*Reg.* Be simple answer'd, for we know the truth.

*Corn.* And what confederacy have you with  
the traitors

Late footed in the kingdom?

*Reg.* To whose hands have you sent the lun-  
atic king?

Speak.

*Glo.* I have a letter guessingly set down,  
Which came from one that's of a neutral heart,  
And not from one opposed.



*Corn.*

*Cunning.*

*And false.*

*Reg.*

*Corn.* Where hast thou sent the king?

*Glo.*

To Dover.

*Reg.*

Wherefore  
To Dover? Wast thou not charged at thy peril —

*Corn.* Wherefore to Dover? Let him first answer that.

*Glo.* I am tied to the stake, and I must stand the course.

*Reg.* Wherefore to Dover?

*Glo.* Because I would not see thy cruel nails  
Pluck out his poor old eyes; nor thy fierce sister  
In his anointed flesh stick boarish fangs.

The sea, with such a storm as his bare head  
In hell-black night endured, would have buoy'd up,  
And quench'd the stelled fires: yet, poor old heart,  
He help the heavens to rain.

If wolves had at thy gate howl'd that stern time,  
Thou shouldst have said, *Good porter, turn the  
key;*

All cruels else subscribed: — But I shall see  
The winged vengeance overtake such children.

*Corn.* See it shalt thou never: — Fellows,  
hold the chair:

Upon these eyes of thine I'll set my foot.

*(GLOSTER is held down in his Chair, while CORNWALL plucks  
out one of his Eyes, and sets his Foot on it.)*

*Glo.* He, that will think to live till he be old,  
Give me some help: O cruel! O ye gods!

*Reg.* One side will mock another; the other  
too.

*Corn.* If you see vengeance, —

*Serv.* Hold your hand, my lord:

I have served you ever since I was a child;  
But better service have I never done you,  
Than now to bid you hold.

*Reg.* How now, you dog?

*Serv.* If you did wear a beard upon your chin,  
I'd shake it on this quarrel; What do you mean?

*Corn.* My villain! *(Draws, and runs at him.)*

*Serv.* Nay, then come on, and take the chance  
of anger.

*(Draws. They fight. CORN. is wounded.)*



*Reg.* Give me thy sword. (*To another Serv.*) A peasant stand up thus!

(*Snatches a Sword, comes behind, and stabs him.*)

*Serv.* O, I am slain! — My lord, you have one eye left

To see some mischief on him: — O! (*Dies.*)

*Corn.* Lest it see more, prevent it: — Out, vile jelly!

Where is thy lustre now?

(*Tears out GLOSTER's other Eye, and throws it on the Ground.*)

*Glo.* All dark and comfortless. Where's my son Edmund?

Edmund, enkindle all the sparks of nature,  
To quit this horrid act.

*Reg.* Out, treacherous villain!  
Thou callst on him that hates thee: it was he  
That made the overture of thy treasons to us;  
Who is too good to pity thee.

*Glo.* O my follies!  
Then Edgar was abused.

Kind gods, forgive me that, and prosper him!

*Reg.* Go, thrust him out at gates, and let him  
smell

His way to Dover. — How is't, my lord? How  
look you?

*Corn.* I have received a hurt: — Follow me,  
lady. —

Turn out that eyeless villain; — throw this slave  
Upon the dunghill. — Regan, I bleed apace:

Untimely comes this hurt: Give me your arm.

(*Exit CORN. led by REGAN, — Servants unbind GLOSTER, and lead him out.*)

1 *Serv.* I'll never care what wickedness I do,  
If this man come to good.

2 *Serv.* If she live long,  
And, in the end, meet the old course of death,  
Women will all turn monsters.

1 *Serv.* Let's follow the old earl, and get the  
Bedlam

To lead him where he would; his roguish mad-  
ness

Allows itself to any thing.

2 *Serv.* Go thou; I'll fetch some flax, and  
whites of eggs,



To apply to his bleeding face. Now, heaven help him! (*Exeunt severally.*)

~~~~~

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The Heath.

Enter EDGAR.

Edg. Yet better thus, and known to be contemn'd,
Than still contemn'd and flatter'd. To be worst,
The lowest and most dejected thing of fortune,
Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear:
The lamentable change is from the best;
The worst returns to laughter. Welcome then,
Thou unsubstantial air, that I embrace!
The wretch, that thou hast blown unto the worst,
Owes nothing to thy blasts. — But who comes here? —

Enter GLOSTER, *led by an old Man.*

My father, poorly led? — World, world, O world!
But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,
Life would not yield to age.

Old M. O, my good lord, I have been your tenant, and your father's tenant, these fourscore years.

Glo. Away, get thee away; good friend, be gone:
Thy comforts can do me no good at all,
Thee they may hurt.

Old M. Alack, sir, you cannot see your way.

Glo. I have no way, and therefore want no eyes;
I stumbled when I saw: Full oft 'tis seen,
Our mean secures us; and our mere defects

Prove our commodities. — Ah, dear son Edgar,
The food of thy abused father's wrath!
Might I but live to see thee in my touch,
I'd say, I'd eyes again?

Old M. How now? Who's there?

Edg. (Aside.) O gods! Who is't can say, *I am at the worst!*

I am worse than e'er I was.

Old M. 'Tis poor mad Tom.

Edg. (Aside.) And worse I may be yet; The worst is not,

So long as we can say, *This is the worst.*

Old M. Fellow, where goest?

Glo. Is it a beggar-man?

Old M. Madman and beggar too.

Glo. He has some reason, else he could not beg.

I'the last night's storm I such a fellow saw;
Which made me think a man a worm: My son
Came then into my mind; and yet my mind
Was then scarce friends with him: I have heard
more since:

As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods;
They kill us for their sport.

Edg. How should this be? —
Bad is the trade must play the fool to sorrow,
Angering itself and others. *(Aside.)* — Bless thee,
master!

Glo. Is that the naked fellow?

Old M. Ay, my lord.

Glo. Then, prithee, get thee gone: If, for my sake,

Thou wilt o'ertake us, hence a mile or twain,
I'the way to Dover, do it for ancient love;
And bring some covering for this naked soul,
Whom I'll entreat to lead me.

Old M. Alack, sir, he's mad.

Glo. 'Tis the time's plague, when madmen lead the blind.

Do as I bid thee, or rather do thy pleasure;
Above the rest, be gone.

Old M. I'll bring him the best 'parel that I have,
Come on't what will. *(Exit.)*

Glo. Sirrah, naked fellow!

Edg. Poor Tom's a-cold — I cannot daub it further. (*Aside.*)

Glo. Come hither, fellow.

Edg. (*Aside.*) And yet I must. — — Bless thy sweet eyes, they bleed.

Glo. Knowst thou the way to Dover?

Edg. Both stile and gate, horse-way, and foot-path. Poor Tom hath been scared out of his good wits: Bless the good man from the foul fiend! Five fiends have been in poor Tom at once; of lust, as *Obidicut*; *Hobbididance*, prince of dumbness; *Mahu*, of stealing; *Modo*, of murder; and *Flibbertigibbet*, of mopping and mowing; who since possesses chamber-maids and waiting-women. So, bless thee, master!

Glo. Here, take this purse, thou whom the heaven's plagues
Have humbled to all strokes; that I am wretched
Makes thee the happier: — Heavens, deal so still!
Let the superfluous, and lust-dieted man,
That slaves your ordinance, that will not see
Because he doth not feel, feel your power quickly;
So distribution should undo excess,
And each man have enough. — — Dost thou know
Dover?

Edg. Ay, master.

Glo. There is a cliff, whose high and bending head
Looks fearfully in the confined deep:
Bring me but to the very brim of it,
And I'll repair the misery thou dost bear,
With something rich about me: from that place
I shall no leading need.

Edg. Give me thy arm:
Poor Tom shall lead thee. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II.

Before the Duke of Albany's Palace.

*Enter GONERIL and EDMUND; Steward
meeting them.*

Gon. Welcome, my lord: I marvel, our mild
husband

Not met us on the way: — Now, where's your master?

Stew. Madam, within; but never man so changed;
I told him of the army that was landed;
He smiled at it: I told him, you were coming;
His answer was, *The worse*: of Gloster's treachery,
And of the loyal service of his son,
When I inform'd him, then he call'd me sot;
And told me, I had turn'd the wrong side out: —
What most he should dislike, seems pleasant to him;
What like, offensive.

Gon. Then shall you go no further.
(*To EDMUND.*)

It is the cowish terror of his spirit,
That dares not undertake: he'll not feel wrongs,
Which tie him to an answer: Our wishes, on the way,
May prove effects. Back, Edmund, to my brother:
Hasten his musters, and conduct his powers:
I must change arms at home, and give the distaff
Into my husband's hands. This trusty servant
Shall pass between us: ere long, you are like to hear,

If you dare venture in your own behalf,
A mistress's command. Wear this; spare speech;
(*Giving a favor.*)

Decline your head: this kiss, if it durst speak,
Would stretch thy spirits up into the air; —
Conceive, and fare thee well.

Edm. Yours in the ranks of death.

Gon. My most dear Gloster!
(*Exit EDMUND.*)

O, the difference of man, and man! To thee
A woman's services are due; my fool
Usurps my bed.

Stew. Madam, here comes m lord.
(*Exit Steward.*)

Enter ALBANY.

Gon. I have been worth the whistle.

Alb. O Goneril!

You are not worth the dust which the rude wind
Blows in your face — I fear your disposition;
That nature, which contemns its origin,
Cannot be border'd certain in itself;
She that herself will sliver and disbranch
From her material sap, perforce must wither,
And come to deadly use.

Gon. No more; the text is foolish.

Alb. Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem
vile:

Filths savor but themselves. What have you
done?

Tigers, not daughters, what have you perform'd?
A father, and a gracious aged man,
Whose reverence the head-lugg'd bear would lick,
Most barbarous, most degenerate! have you mad-
ded.

Could my good brother suffer you to do it?

A man, a prince, by him so benefited?

If that the heavens do not their visible spirits
Send quickly down to tame these vile offences,
'Twill come,

Humanity must perforce prey on itself,
Like monsters of the deep.

Gon.

Milk-liver'd man!

That bearest a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs;
Who hast not in thy brows an eye discerning
Thine honor from thy suffering; that not knowst,
Fools do those villains pity, who are punish'd
Ere they have done their mischief. Where's thy
drum?

France spreads his banners in our noiseless land;
With plumed helm thy slayer begins threats;
Whilst thou, a moral fool, sit'st still, and criest,
Alack! why does he so?

Alb.

See thyself, devil!

Proper deformity seems not in the fiend
So horrid, as in woman.

Gon.

O vain fool!

Alb. Thou changed and self-cover'd thing,
for shame,

Be-monster not thy feature. Were it my fitness
To let these hands obey my blood,
They are apt enough to dislocate and tear

Thy flesh and bones; — Howe'er thou art a fiend,
A woman's shape doth shield thee.

Gon. Marry, your manhood now!

Enter a Messenger.

Alb. What news?

Mess. O, my good lord, the duke of Cornwall's dead,
Slain by his servant, going to put out
The other eye of Gloster.

Alb. Gloster's eyes!

Mess. A servant that he bred, thrill'd with
remorse,
Opposed against the act, bending his sword
To his great master; who, thereat enraged,
Flew on him, and amongst them fell'd him dead:
But not without that harmful stroke, which since
Hath pluck'd him after.

Alb. — This shows you are above,
You justicers, that these our nether crimes
So speedily can venge! — But, O poor Gloster!
Lost he his other eye?

Mess. Both, both, my lord. —
This letter, madam, craves a speedy answer;
'Tis from your sister.

Gon. (*Aside.*) One way I like this well;
But being widow, and my Gloster with her,
May all the building in my fancy pluck
Upon my hateful life: Another way,
The news is not so tart. — I'll read and answer.

(*Exit.*)

Alb. Where was his son, when they did take
his eyes?

Mess. Come with my lady hither.

Alb. He is not here.

Mess. No, my good lord; I met him back
again.

Alb. Knows he the wickedness?

Mess. Ay, my good lord; 'twas he inform'd
against him;
And quit the house on purpose, that their punishment
Might have the freer course.

Alb. Gloster, I live

To thank thee for the love thou show'dst the king,
And to revenge thine eyes. — Come hither, friend;
Tell me what more thou knowest. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III.

The French Camp near Dover.

Enter KENT, and a Gentleman.

Kent. Why the king of France is so suddenly gone back know you the reason?

Gent. Something he left imperfect in the state,
Which since his coming forth is thought of; which
Imports to the kingdom so much fear and danger,
That his personal return was most required,
And necessary.

Kent. Who hath he left behind him general?

Gent. The Mareschal of France, Monsieur
le Fer.

Kent. Did your letters pierce the queen to any demonstration of grief?

Gent. Ay, sir; she took them, read them in
my presence;

And now and then an ample tear trill'd down
Her delicate cheek: it seem'd, she was a queen
Over her passion; who, most rebel-like,
Sought to be king o'er her.

Kent. O, then it moved her.

Gent. Not to a rage: patience and sorrow
strove

Who should express her goodliest. You have seen
Sunshine and rain at once: her smiles and tears
Were like a better day: Those happy smiles,
That play'd on her ripe lip, seem'd not to know
What guests were in her eyes; which parted
thence,

As pearls from diamonds dropp'd. — In brief,
sorrow

Would be a rarity most beloved, if all
Could so become it.

Kent. Made she no verbal question?

Gent. 'Faith, once, or twice, she heaved the
name of *father*

Pantingly forth, as if it press'd her heart;

*Cried, Sisters! sisters! — Shame of ladies! sisters!
Kent! father! sisters! What? i'the Storm? i'the
night?*

*Let pity not be believed! — There she shook
The holy water from her heavenly eyes,
And clamor moisten'd: then away she started
To deal with grief alone.*

Kent. It is the stars,
The stars above us, govern our conditions;
Else one self mate and mate could not beget
Such different issues. You spoke not with her
since?

Gent. No.

Kent. Was this before the king return'd?

Gent. No, since.

Kent. Well, sir; The poor distress'd Lear is
i'the town;

Who sometime, in his better tune, remembers
What we are come about, and by no means
Will yield to see his daughter.

Gent. Why, good sir?

Kent. A sovereign shame so elbows him: his
own unkindness,
That stripp'd her from his benediction, turn'd her
To foreign casualties, gave her dear rights
To his dog-hearted daughters, — these things sting
His mind so venomously, that burning shame
Detains him from Cordelia.

Gent. Alack, poor gentleman!

Kent. Of Albany's and Cornwall's powers you
heard not?

Gent. 'Tis so; they are afoot.

Kent. Well, sir, I'll bring you to our master
Lear,

And leave you to attend him: some dear cause
Will in concealment wrap me up awhile;
When I am known aright, you shall not grieve
Lending me this acquaintance. I pray you, go
Along with me.

(Exeunt.)

SCENE IV.

*The same. A Tent.**Enter CORDELIA. Physician and Soldiers.*

Cor. Alack, 'tis he; why, he was met even
now

As mad as the vex'd sea; singing aloud;
Crown'd with rank fumiter, and furrow weeds,
With harlocks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-flowers,
Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow
In our sustaining corn. — A century send forth;
Search every acre in the high-grown field,
And bring him to our eye. (*Exit an Officer.*) —

What can man's wisdom do,
In the restoring his bereaved sense?
He, that helps him, take all my outward worth.

Phy. There is means, madam:
Our foster-nurse of nature is repose,
The which he lacks; that to provoke in him,
Are many simples operative, whose power
Will close the eye anguish.

Cor. All bless'd secrets,
All you unpublish'd virtues of the earth,
Spring with my tears! be aidant, and remediate,
In the good man's distress! — Seek, seek for him;
Lest his ungovern'd rage dissolve the life
That wants the means to lead it.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Madam, news;
The British powers are marching hitherward.

Cor. 'Tis known before; our preparation stands
In expectation of them. — O dear father,
It is thy business that I go about;
Therefore great France
My mourning, and important tears, hath pitied.
No blown ambition doth our arms incite,
But love, dear love, and our aged father's right:
Soon may I hear, and see him.

(Exeunt.)

SCENE V.

*A Room in Gloster's Castle.**Enter REGAN and Steward.**Reg.* But are my brother's powers set forth?*Stew.*

Ay, madam.

Reg.

Himself

n person there?

Stew.

Madam, with much ado:

Your sister is the better soldier.

Reg. Lord Edmund spake not with your lord
at home?*Stew.* No, madam.*Reg.* What might import my sister's letter to him?*Stew.* I know not, lady.*Reg.* 'Faith, he is posted hence on serious
matter.

It was great ignorance, Gloster's eyes being out,
To let him live; where he arrives, he moves
All hearts against us: Edmund, I think, is gone,
In pity of his misery, to despatch
His nighted life; moreover, to descry
The strength o'the enemy.

Stew. I must needs after him, madam, with
my letter.*Reg.* Our troops set forth to-morrow; stay
with us;

The ways are dangerous.

Stew.

I may not, madam;

My lady charged my duty in this business.

Reg. Why should she write to Edmund? might
not you

Transport her purposes by word? Belike,
Something — I know not what: — I'll love thee
much,

Let me unseal the letter.

Stew.

Madam, I had rather —

Reg. I know, your lady does not love her
husband;

I am sure of that: and, at her late being here,
She gave strange oeiliads, and most speaking looks
To noble Edmund: I know, you are of her
bosom.

Stew. I, madam?

Reg. I speak in understanding; you are, I know it:

Therefore, I do advise you, take this note:
My lord is dead; Edmund and I have talk'd;
And more convenient is he for my hand,
Than for your lady's: — You may gather more.
If you do find him, pray you, give him this;
And when your mistress hears thus much from
you,

I pray, desire her call her wisdom to her.

So, fare you well.

If you do chance to hear of that blind traitor,
Preferment falls on him that cuts him off.

Stew. 'Would I could meet him, madam! I would show

What party I do follow.

Reg.

Fare thee well. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE VI.

The Country near Dover.

Enter GLOSTER, and EDGAR, dressed like a Peasant.

Glo. When shall we come to the top of that same hill?

Edg. You do climb up it now: look, how we labor.

Glo. Methinks, the ground is even.

Edg. Horrible steep:

Hark, do you hear the sea?

Glo. No, truly.

Edg. Why, then your other senses grow imperfect

By your eyes' anguish.

Glo. So may it be, indeed:

Methinks, thy voice is alter'd; and thou speakst
In better phrase, and matter, than thou didst.

Edg. You are much deceived; in nothing am I changed,
But in my garments.

Glo. Methinks, you are better spoken.

Edg. Come on, sir; here's the place: — stand still. — How fearful
And dizzy 'tis, to cast one's eyes so low!
The crows, and choughs, that wing the midway air,
Show scarce so gross as beetles: Half way down
Hangs one that gathers samphire; dreadful trade!
Methinks, he seems no bigger than his head:
The fishermen, that walk upon the beach,
Appear like mice; and yon tall anchoring bark,
Diminish'd to her cock; her cock, a buoy
Almost too small for sight: The murmuring surge,
That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,
Cannot be heard so high: — I'll look no more;
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong.

Glo. Set me where you stand.

Edg. Give me your hand: You are now within
a foot
Of the extreme verge: for all beneath the moon
Would I not leap upright.

Glo. Let go my hand.
Here, friend, is another purse; in it a jewel
Well worth a poor man's taking: Fairies, and
gods,
Prosper it with thee! Go thou further off;
Bid me farewell, and let me hear thee going.

Edg. Now, fare you well, good sir.

(Seems to go.)

Glo. With all my heart.

Edg. Why I do trifle thus with his despair,
Is done to cure it.

Glo. O you mighty gods!
This world I do renounce; and, in your sights,
Shake patiently my great affliction off:
If I could bear it longer, and not fall
To quarrel with your great opposeless wills,
My snuff, and loathed part of nature, should
Burn itself out. If Edgar live, O, bless him! —
Now, fellow, fare thee well.

(He leaps, and falls along.)

Edg. Gone, sir? farewell. —
And yet I know not how conceit may rob
The treasury of life, when life itself
Yields to the theft: Had he been where he thought,

By this, had thought been past. — Alive, or dead?
 Ho, you sir! friend! — Hear you, sir? — speak!
 Thus might he pass indeed: — Yet he revives:
 What are you, sir?

Glo. Away, and let me die.

Edg. Hadst thou been aught but gossamer,
 feathers, air,
 So many fathom down precipitating,
 Thou hadst shiver'd like an egg: but thou dost
 breathe;
 Hast heavy substance; bleed'st not; speakst; art
 sound.

Ten masts at each make not the altitude,
 Which thou hast perpendicularly fell;
 Thy life's a miracle: Speak yet again.

Glo. But have I fallen, or no?

Edg. From the dread summit of this chalky
 bourn;
 Look up a-height; — the shrill-gorged lark so far
 Cannot be seen or heard: do but look up.

Glo. Alack, I have no eyes. —
 Is wretchedness deprived that benefit
 To end itself by death? 'Twas yet some comfort,
 When misery could beguile the tyrant's rage,
 And frustrate his proud will.

Edg. Give me your arm:
 Up: So; — How is't? Feel you your legs? You
 stand.

Glo. Too well, too well.

Edg. This is above all strangeness.
 Upon the crown o'the cliff, what thing was that
 Which parted from you?

Glo. A poor unfortunate beggar.

Edg. As I stood here below, methought, his
 eyes
 Were two full moons; he had a thousand noses,
 Horns wheel'd, and waved like the enridged sea;
 It was some fiend: Therefore, thou happy father,
 Think that the clearest gods, who make them
 honors
 Of men's impossibilities, have preserved thee.

Glo. I do remember now: henceforth I'll
 bear
 Affliction, till it do cry out itself,

Enough, enough, and, die. That thing you speak of,
I took it for a man; often 'twould say,
The fiend, the fiend: he led me to that place.

Edg. Bear free and patient thoughts. — But
who comes here?

*Enter LEAR, fantastically dressed up
with Flowers.*

The safer sense will ne'er accommodate
His master thus.

Lear. No, they cannot touch me for coining,
I am the king himself.

Edg. O thou side-piercing sight!

Lear. Nature's above art in that respect. There's
your press-money. That fellow handles his
bowlike a crow-keeper: draw me a clothier's yard.
Look, look, a mouse! Peace, peace; this piece of
toasted cheese will do't. There's my gauntlet; I'll
prove it on a giant. Bring up the brown bills.
O, well flown, bird! i'the clout, i'the clout: hewgh!
Give the word.

Edg. Sweet marjoram.

Lear. Pass.

Glo. I know that voice.

Lear. Ha! Goneril! with a white beard! —
They flatter'd me like a dog; and told me, I had
white hairs in my beard, ere the black ones were
there. To say *ay*, and *no*, to every thing I said. —
Ay and *no* too was no good divinity. When the
rain came to wet me once, and the wind to make
me chatter; when the thunder would not peace at
my bidding; there I found them, there I smelt
them out. Go to, they are not men o'their words:
they told me I was every thing: 'tis a lie; I am
not ague-proof.

Glo. The trick of that voice I do well re-
member:

Is't not the king?

Lear. Ay, every inch a king;

When I do stare, see, how the subject quakes.

I pardon that man's life; what was thy cause? —

Adultery. —

Thou shalt not die: Die for adultery! No:

The wren goes to't, and the small gilded fly
 Does lecher in my sight.
 Let copulation thrive, for Gloster's bastard son
 Was kinder to his father, than my daughters
 Got 'tween the lawful sheets.
 To't, luxury, pell-mell, for I lack soldiers. —
 Behold yon simpering dame
 Whose face between her forks presageth snow;
 That minces virtue, and does shake the head
 To hear of pleasure's name;
 The fitchew, nor the soiled horse, goes to't
 With a more riotous appetite.
 Down from the waist they are centaurs,
 Though women all above;
 But to the girdle do the gods inherit,
 Beneath is all the fiend's: there's hell, there's
 darkness,
 There is the sulphurous pit, burning, scalding,
 stench, consumption; — Fie, fie, fie! pah, pah!
 Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to
 sweeten my imagination: there's money for thee.

Glo. O, let me kiss that hand!

Lear. Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality.

Glo. O ruin'd piece of nature! This great world

Shall so wear out to naught. — Dost thou know me?

Lear. I remember thine eyes well enough.
 Dost thou squiny at me? No, do thy worst, blind
 Cupid; I'll not love. — Read thou this challenge;
 mark but the penning of it.

Glo. Were all the letters suns, I could not
 see one.

Edg. I would not take this from report; — it is,
 And my heart breaks at it.

Lear. Read.

Glo. What, with the case of eyes?

Lear. O, ho, are you there with me? No
 eyes in your head, nor no money in your purse?
 Your eyes are in a heavy case, your purse in a
 light: Yet you see how this world goes.

Glo. I see it feelingly.

Lear. What, art mad? A man may see how
 this world goes, with no eyes. Look with thine

ears: see how yon' justice rails upon yon' simple thief. Hark, in thine ear: Change places; and handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief? — Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar?

Glo. Ay, sir.

Lear. And the creature run from the cur? There thou mightst behold the great image of authority: a dog's obeyed in office.

Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand:

Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thine own back;

Thou hotly lust'st to use her in that kind

For which thou whipp'st her. The usurer hangs the cozener.

Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;
Robes, and furr'd gowns, hide all. Plate sin with gold,

And the streng lance of justice hurtless breaks:

Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw doth pierce it.

None does offend, none, I say, none; I'll able 'em:

Take that of me, my friend, who have the power

To seal the accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes;

And, like a scurvy politician, seem

To see the things thou dost not. — Now, now, now, now:

Pull off my boots: — harder, harder; so.

Edg. O, matter and impertinency mix'd!

Reason in madness!

Lear. If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes,

I know thee well enough; thy name is Gloster;

Thou must be patient; we came crying hither.

Thou knowst, the first time that we smell the air,

We wawl, and cry: — I will preach to thee; mark me.

Glo. Alack, alack the day!

Lear. When we are born, we cry, that we are come

To this great stage of fools: — This a good block?

It were a delicate stratagem, to shoe

A troop of horse with felt: I'll put it in proof;

And when I have stolen upon these sons-in-law,

Then, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill.

Enter a Gentleman, with Attendants.

Gent. O, here he is, lay hand upon him, —
Sir,
Your most dear daughter — —

Lear. No rescue? What, a prisoner? I am
even
The natural fool of fortune. — Use me well;
You shall have ransome. Let me have a surgeon,
I am cut to the brains.

Gent. You shall have any thing.

Lear. No seconds? All myself?
Why, this would make a man, a man of salt,
To use his eyes for garden water-pots,
Ay, and for laying autumn's dust.

Gent. Good sir, —

Lear. I will die bravely, like a bridegroom:
What?

I will be jovial; come, come; I am a king,
My masters, know you that!

Gent. You are a royal one, and we obey
you.

Lear. Then there's life in it. Nay, an you
get it, you shall get it by running. Sa, sa, sa, sa.
(*Exit running; Attendants follow.*)

Gent. A sight most pitiful in the meanest
wretch,
Past speaking of in a king! Thou hast one daugh-
ter,
Who redeems nature from the general curse
Which twain have brought her to.

Edg. Hail, gentle sir.

Gent. Sir, speed you: What's your will?

Edg. Do you hear aught, sir, of a battle to-
ward?

Gent. Most sure, and vulgar: every one hears
that,
Which can distinguish sound.

Edg. But, by your favor,
How near's the other army?

Gent. Near, and on speedy foot, the main
descry
Stands on the hourly thought.

Edg. I thank you, sir: that's all.

Gent. Though that the queen on special cause
is here,
Her army is moved on.

Edg. I thank you, sir.

(Exit Gentleman.)

Glo. You ever-gentle gods, take my breath
from me;
Let not my worser spirit tempt me again
To die before you please!

Edg. Well pray you, father.

Glo. Now, good sir, what are you?

Edg. A most poor man, made tame by fortune's blows:

Who, by the art of known and feeling sorrows,
Am pregnant to good pity. Give me your hand,
I'll lead you to some bidding.

Glo. Hearty thanks:
The bounty and the benison of heaven
To boot, and boot!

Enter Steward.

Stew. A proclaim'd prize! Most happy!
That eyeless head of thine was first framed flesh
To raise my fortunes. — Thou old unhappy traitor,
Briefly thyself remember: — The sword is out
That must destroy thee.

Glo. Now let thy friendly hand
Put strength enough to it. (EDGAR opposes.)

Stew. Wherefore, bold peasant,
Darest thou support a publish'd traitor? Hence;
Lest that the infection of his fortune take
Like hold on thee. Let go his arm.

Edg. Ch'ill not let go, zir, without vurther
'easion.

Stew. Let go, slave, or thou diest.

Edg. Good gentleman, go your gait, and let
poor volk pass. And ch'ud ha' been zwagger'd
out of my life, 'twould not ha' been zo long as
'tis by a vortnight. Nay, come not near the old
man; keep out, che vor'ye, or ise try whether
your costard or my bat be the harder: Ch'ill be
plain with you.

Stew. Out, dunghill!

Edg. Ch'll pick your teeth, zir: Come; no matter vor your foins.

(They fight; and EDGAR knocks him down.)

Stew. Slave, thou hast slain me: — Villain, take my purse;
If ever thou wilt thrive, bury my body;
And give the letters, which thou find'st about me,
To Edmund, earl of Gloster; seek him out
Upon the British party: — O, untimely death!

(Dies.)

Edg. I know thee well: A serviceable villain;
As duteous to the vices of thy mistress,
As badness would desire.

Glo. What, is he dead?

Edg. Sit you down, father; rest you. —
Let's see his pockets: these letters, that he speaks of,
May be my friends. — He's dead: I am only
sorry

He had no other death's-man. — Let us see:
Leave, gentle wax; and, manners, blame us not:
To know our enemies' minds, we'd rip their hearts;
Their papers, is more lawful.

(Reads.) Let our reciprocal vows be remembered. You have many opportunities to cut him off: if your will want not, time and place will be fruitfully offered. There is nothing done, if he return the conqueror: Then am I the prisoner, and his bed my gaol; from the loathed warmth whereof deliver me, and supply the place for your labor.

Your wife, (so I would say,) and your
affectionate servant,

GONERIL.

O undistinguish'd space of woman's will! —
A plot upon her virtuous husband's life;
And the exchange, my brother! — Here, in the
sands,

Thee I'll rake up, the post unsanctified
Of murderous lechers: and, in the mature time,
With this ungracious paper strike the sight
Of the death-practised duke: For him 'tis well,
That of thy death and business I can tell.

(Exit EDGAR, dragging out the body.)

Glo. The king is mad: How stiff is my vile sense,

That I stand up, and have ingenious feeling
Of my huge sorrows! Better I were distract:
So should my thoughts be sever'd from my griefs;
And woes, by wrong imaginations, lose
The knowledge of themselves.

Re-enter EDGAR.

Edg. Give me your hand:
Far off, methinks, I hear the beaten drum.
Come, father, I'll bestow you with a friend.

(Exeunt.)

SCENE VII.

A Tent in the French Camp. LEAR, on a Bed, asleep: Physician, Gentleman, and others, attending.

Enter CORDELIA and KENT.

Cor. O, thou good Kent, how shall I live,
and work,
To match thy goodness? My life will be too
short,
And every measure fail me.

Kent. To be acknowledged, madam, is o'er-
paid.
All my reports go with the modest truth;
Nor more nor clipp'd, but so.

Cor. Be better suited:
These weeds are memories of those worser hours;
I prithee, put them off.

Kent. Pardon me, dear madam;
Yet to be known, shortens my made intent:
My boon I make it, that you know me not,
Till time and I think meet.

Cor. Then be it so, my good lord. — How
does the king? *(To the Physician.)*

Phys. Madam, sleeps still.

Cor. O you kind gods,
Cure this great breach in his abused nature!
The untuned and jarring senses, O, wind up,
Of this child-changed father!

Phys. So please your majesty,
That we may wake the king? he hath slept long.

*

Cor. Be govern'd by your knowledge, and proceed
I' the sway of your own will. Is he array'd?

Gent. Ay, madam; in the heaviness of his sleep,

We put fresh garments on him.

Phys. Be by, good madam, when we do awake him;

I doubt not of his temperance.

Cor. Very well.

Phys. Please you, draw near. — Louder the music there.

Cor. O, my dear father! Restoration, hang
Thy medicine on my lips: and let this kiss
Repair those violent harms, that my two sisters
Have in thy reverence made!

Kent. Kind and dear princess!

Cor. Had you not been their father, these
white flakes
Had challenged pity of them. Was this a face
To be exposed against the warring winds?
To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder?
In the most terrible and nimble stroke
Of quick, cross lightning? to watch (poor perdu!)
With this thin helm? Mine enemy's dog,
Though he had bit me, should have stood that
night

Against my fire: And wast thou fain, poor father,
To hovel thee with swine, and rogues forlorn,
In short and musty straw? Alack, alack!
'Tis wonder, that thy life and wits at once
Had not concluded all. — He wakes; speak to him.

Phys. Madam, do you; 'tis fittest.

Cor. How does my royal lord? How fares
your majesty?

Lear. You do me wrong, to take me out o'the
grave: — —

Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead.

Cor. Sir, do you know me?

Lear. You are a spirit, I know: When did
you die?

Cor. Still, still far wide!

Phys. He's scarce awake; let him alone awhile.

Lear. Where have I been? — Where am I? —

Fair day-light?

I am mightily abused. — I should even die with pity,

To see another thus. — I know not what to say. —

I will not swear, these are my hands: — let's see;

I feel this pin prick. Would I were assured

Of my condition.

Cor.

O, look upon me, sir,

And hold your hands in benediction o'er me; —

No, sir, you must not kneel.

Lear.

Pray, do not mock me:

I am a very foolish fond old man,

Fourscore and upward, and, to deal plainly,

I fear, I am not in my perfect mind:

Methinks, I should know you, and know this man:

Yet I am doubtful: for I am mainly ignorant

What place this is: and all the skill I have

Remembers not these garments; nor I know not

Where I did lodge last night: Do not laugh at me,

For, as I am a man, I think this lady

To be my child Cordelia.

Cor.

And so I am, I am.

Lear. Be your tears wet? Yes, faith. I pray,
weep not:

If you have poison for me, I will drink it.

I know, you do not love me; for your sisters

Have, as I do remember, done me wrong:

You have some cause, they have not.

Cor.

No cause, no cause.

Lear. Am I in France?

Kent.

In your own kingdom, sir.

Lear. Do not abuse me.

Phys. Be comforted, good madam: the great
rage,

You see, is cured in him: and yet it is danger

To make him even o'er the time he has lost.

Desire him to go in; trouble him no more,

Till further settling.

Cor. Will't please your highness walk?

Lear.

You must bear with me:

Pray now, forget and forgive: I am old, and foolish.

(*Exeunt* LEAR, COR. Physician, and Attendants.)

Gent. Holds it true, sir,
That the duke of Cornwall was so slain?

Kent. Most certain, sir.

Gent. Who is conductor of his people?

Kent. As 'tis said,

The bastard son of Gloster.

Gent. They say, Edgar,
His banish'd son, is with the earl of Kent
In Germany.

Kent. Report is changeable.
'Tis time to look about; the powers o'the king dom
Approach apace.

Gent. The arbitrement is like to be a bloody.
Fare you well, sir. (*Exit.*)

Kent. My point and period will be thoroughly
wrought,
Or well, or ill, as this day's battle's fought.
(*Exit.*)

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The Camp of the British Forces near Dover.
Enter, with Drums and Colors, ED-
MUND, REGAN, Officers, Soldiers, and
others.

Edm. Know of the duke, if his last purpose
hold;
Or, whether since he is advised by aught
To change the course: He's full of alteration,
And self-reproving: — bring his constant pleasure.

(*To an Officer, who goes out.*)

Reg. Our sister's man is certainly miscarried.

Edm. 'Tis to be doubted, madam.

Reg. Now, sweet lord,
You know the goodness I intend upon you:

Tell me, — but truly, — but then speak the truth,
Do you not love my sister?

Edm. In honor'd love.

Reg. But have you never found my brother's
way

To the forefended place?

Edm. That thought abuses you.

Reg. I am doubtful that you have been con-
junct

And bosom'd with her, as far as we call hers.

Edm. No, by mine honor, madam.

Reg. I never shall endure her: Dear my lord,
Be not familiar with her.

Edm. Fear me not: —

She, and the duke her husband, — —

Enter ALBANY, GONERIL, *and* Soldiers.

Gon. I had rather lose the battle, than that
sister

Should loosen him and me. (*Aside.*)

Alb. Our very loving sister, well be met. —
Sir, this I hear, — The king is come to his
daughter,

With others, whom the rigour of our state
Forced to cry out. Where I could not be honest,
I never yet was valiant: for this business,
It toucheth us as France invades our land,
Not bolds the king; with others, whom, I fear,
Most just and heavy causes make oppose.

Edm. Sir, you speak nobly.

Reg. Why is this reason'd?

Gon. Combine together 'gainst the enemy:
For these domestic and particular broils
Are not to question here.

Alb. Let us then determine
With the ancient of war on our proceedings.

Edm. I shall attend you presently at your
tent.

Reg. Sister, you'll go with us?

Gon. No.

Reg. 'Tis most convenient; pray you, go
with us.

Gon. O, ho, I know the riddle: (*Aside.*) I
will go.

As they are going out, enter EDGAR, disguised.

Edg. If e'er your grace had speech with man
so poor,
Hear me one word.

Alb. I'll overtake you. — Speak.
(*Exeunt EDMUND, REGAN, GONERIL, Officers, Soldiers and Attendants.*)

Edg. Before you fight the battle, ope this letter.

If you have victory, let the trumpet sound
For him that brought it: wretched though I seem,
I can produce a champion, that will prove
What is avouched there: If you miscarry,
Your business of the world hath so an end,
And machination ceases. Fortune love you!

Alb. Stay till I have read the letter.

Edg. I was forbid it.
When time shall serve, let but the herald cry,
And I'll appear again. (*Exit.*)

Alb. Why, fare thee well; I will o'erlook thy paper.

Re-enter EDMUND.

Edm. The enemy's in view, draw up your powers.

Here is the guess of their true strength and forces,
By diligent discovery: — but your haste
Is now urged on you.

Alb. We will greet the time. (*Exit.*)

Edm. To both these sisters have I sworn my love;

Each jealous of the other, as the stung
Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take?
Both? one? or neither? Neither can be enjoy'd,
If both remain alive; To take the widow,
Exasperates, makes mad her sister Goneril;
And hardly shall I carry out my side,
Her husband being alive. Now then, we'll use
His countenance for the battle; which being done,
Let her, who would be rid of him, devise
His speedy taking off. As for the mercy
Which he intends to Lear, and to Cordelia, —

The battle done, and they within our power,
Shall never see his pardon: for my state
Stands on me to defend, not to debate. (*Exit.*)

SCENE II.

A Field between the two Camps.

Alarum within. Enter, with Drum and Colors, LEAR, CORDELIA, and their Forces; and exeunt.

Enter EDGAR and GLOSTER.

Edg. Here, father, take the shadow of this tree
For your good host; pray that the right may
thrive:

If ever I return to you again,
I'll bring you comfort.

Glo. Grace go with you, sir! (*Exit EDG.*)

Alarums; afterwards a Retreat.

Re-enter EDGAR.

Edg. Away, old man, give me thy hand, away;
King Lear hath lost, he and his daughter ta'en:
Give me thy hand, come on.

Glo. No further, sir; a man may rot even
here.

Edg. What, in ill thoughts again? Men must
endure
Their going hence, even as their coming hither:
Ripeness is all: Come on.

Glo. And that's true too.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III.

The British Camp near Dover.

Enter, in Conquest, with Drum and Colors, EDMUND; LEAR and CORDELIA, as Prisoners; Officers, Soldiers, etc.

Edm. Some officers take them away: good
guard;

Until their greater pleasures first be known
That are to censure them.

Cor. We are not the first,
Who, with best meaning, have incurr'd the worst.
For thee, oppressed king, am I cast down;
Myself could else out-frown false fortune's frown.
Shall we not see these daughters, and these sisters?

Lear. No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to
prison:

We two alone will sing like birds i'the cage:
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness: So we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too,
Who loses, and who wins; who's in, who's out; —
And take upon us the mystery of things,
As if we were God's spies: And we'll wear out,
In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones,
That ebb and flow by the moon.

Edm. Take them away.

Lear. Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,
The gods themselves throw incense. Have I caught
thee?

He, that parts us, shall bring a brand from heaven,
And fire us hence, like foxes. Wipe thine eyes;
The goujeers shall devour them, flesh and fell,
Ere they shall make us weep: we'll see them
starve first.

Come. (*Exeunt LEAR and Cor. guarded.*)

Edm. Come hither, captain; hark.
Take thou this note; (*Giving a Paper.*) go, follow
them to prison:

One step I have advanced thee: if thou dost
As this instructs thee, thou dost make thy way
To noble fortunes: Know thou this, — that men
Are as the time is: to be tender-minded
Does not become a sword: — Thy great employ-
ment

Will not bear question; either say, thou'lt do't,
Or thrive by other means.

Off. I'll do't, my lord.

Edm. About it; and write happy, when thou
hast done.

Mark, — I say, instantly; and carry it so,
As I have set it down.

Off. I cannot draw a cart, nor eat dried oats;
If it be man's work, I will do it. (*Exit Officer.*)

Florish. Enter ALBANY, GONERIL,
REGAN, Officers, and Attendants.

Alb. Sir, you have shown to-day your valiant
strain,

And fortune led you well: You have the captives
Who were the opposites of this day's strife:
We do require them of you; so to use them,
As we shall find their merits and our safety
May equally determine.

Edm. Sir, I thought it fit
To send the old and miserable king
To some retention, and appointed guard;
Whose age has charms in it, whose title more,
To pluck the common bosom on his side,
And turn our impress'd lances in our eyes
Which do command them. With him I sent the
queen;

My reason all the same; and they are ready
To-morrow, or at further space, to appear
Where you shall hold your session. At this time,
We sweat and bleed: the friend hath lost his
friend:

And the best quarrels, in the heat, are cursed
By those that feel their sharpness: —
The question of Cordelia, and her father,
Requires a fitter place.

Alb. Sir, by your patience,
I hold you but a subject of this war,
Not as a brother.

Reg. That's as we list to grace him.
Methinks, our pleasure might have been demanded,
Ere you had spoke so far. He led our powers;
Bore the commission of my place and person;
The which immediacy may well stand up,
And call itself your brother.

Gon. Not so hot:
In his own grace he doth exalt himself,
More than in your advancement.

Reg. In my rights,
By me invested, he compeers the best.

Gon. That were the most, if he should husband you.

Reg. Jesters do oft prove prophets.

Gon. Holla, holla!
That eye, that told you so, look'd but a-squint.

Reg. Lady, I am not well; else I should answer

From a full flowing stomach. — General,
Take thou my soldiers, prisoners, patrimony;
Dispose of them, of me, the walls are thine:
Witness the world, that I create thee here
My lord and master.

Gon. Mean you to enjoy him?

Alb. The let-alone lies not in your good will.

Edm. Nor in thine, lord.

Alb. Half-blooded fellow, yes.

Reg. Let the drum strike, and prove my title
thine. (*To EDMUND.*)

Alb. Stay yet; hear reason: Edmund, I arrest
thee

On capital treason; and, in thy arrest,
This gilded serpent: (*Pointing to GON.*) — for your
claim, fair sister,

I bar it in the interest of my wife;
'Tis she, is sub-contracted to this lord,
And I, her husband, contradict your bans.
If you will marry, make your love to me,
My lady is bespoke.

Gon. An interlude!

Alb. Thou art arm'd, Gloster: — Let the trumpet sound:

If none appear to prove upon thy person,
Thy heinous, manifest, and many treasons,
There is my pledge; (*Throwing down a Glove.*) I'll
prove it on thy heart,
Ere I taste bread, thou art in nothing less
Than I have here proclaim'd thee.

Reg. Sick, O, sick!

Gon. If not, I'll ne'er trust poison. (*Aside.*)

Edm. There's my exchange: (*Throwing down a Glove.*) what in the world he is
That names me traitor, villain-like he lies:

Call by thy trumpet: he that dares approach,
On him, on you, (who not?) I will maintain
My truth and honor firmly.

Alb. A herald, ho!

Edm. A herald, he, a herald!

Alb. Trust to thy single virtue; for thy soldiers,
All levied in my name, have, in my name,
Took their discharge.

Reg. This sickness grows upon me.

Enter a Herald.

Alb. She is not well; convey her to my tent.
(*Exit REGAN, led.*)

Come hither, herald. — Let the trumpet sound, —
And read out this.

Off. Sound, trumpet. (*A Trumpet sounds.*)

Herald reads.

If any man of quality, or degree, within the lists of the army, will maintain upon Edmund, supposed earl of Gloster, that he is a manifold traitor, let him appear at the third sound of the trumpet: He is bold in his defence.

Edm. Sound. (*1 Trumpet.*)

Her. Again. (*2 Trumpet.*)

Her. Again. (*3 Trumpet.*)

(*Trumpet answers within.*)

Enter EDGAR, armed, preceded by a Trumpet.

Alb. Ask him his purposes, why he appears
Upon this call o'the trumpet.

Her. What are you?

Your name, your quality? and why you answer
This present summons?

Edg. Know, my name is lost;
By treason's tooth bare-gnawn, and canker-bit:
Yet am I noble as the adversary
I come to cope withal.

Alb. Which is that adversary?

Edg. What's he, that speaks for Edmund earl
of Gloster?

Edm. Himself; — What sayst thou to him?

Edg. Draw thy sword;
That, if my speech offend a noble heart,
Thy arm may do thee justice: here is mine.
Behold, it is the privilege of mine honors,
My oath, and my profession: I protest, —
Maugre thy strength, youth, place, and emi-
nence,
Despite thy victor sword, and fire-new fortune,
Thy valor, and thy heart, — thou art a traitor:
False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father;
Conspirant 'gainst this high illustrious prince;
And, from the extremest upward of thy head,
To the descent and dust beneath thy feet,
A most toad-spotted traitor. Say thou, *No*,
This sword, this arm, and my best spirits, are bent
To prove upon thy heart, whereto I speak,
Thou liest.

Edm. In wisdom, I should ask thy name;
But, since thy outside looks so fair and warlike,
And that thy tongue some 'say of breeding breathes,
What safe and nicely I might well delay
By rule of knighthood, I disdain and spurn:
Back do I toss these treasons to thy head;
With the hell-hated lie o'erwhelm thy heart;
Which, (for they yet glance by, and scarcely
bruise,)
This sword of mine shall give them instant way,
Where they shall rest for ever. — — Trumpets,
speak.

(*Alarums. They fight. EDMUND falls.*)

Alb. O save him, save him!

Gon. This is mere practice, Gloster:
By the law of arms, thou wast not bound to
answer

An unknown opposite; thou art not vanquish'd,
But cozen'd and beguiled.

Alb. Shut your mouth, dame,
Or with this paper shall I stop it: — Hold, sir: —
Thou worse than any name, read thine own evil: —
No tearing, lady: I perceive, you know it.

(*Gives the letter to EDMUND.*)

Gon. Say, if I do; the laws are mine, not thine:
Who shall arraign me for't?

Alb. Most monstrous!
Know'st thou this paper?

Gon. Ask me not what I know.
(*Exit GONERIL.*)

Alb. Go after her: she's desperate; govern her.
(*To an Officer, who goes out.*)

Edm. What you have charged me with, that
have I done;
And more, much more: the time will bring it out;
'Tis past, and so am I! But what art thou,
That hast this fortune on me? If thou art noble,
I do forgive thee.

Edg. Let's exchange charity.
I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund;
If more, the more thou hast wrong'd me.
My name is Edgar, and thy father's son.
The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to scourge us;
The dark and vicious place where thee he got,
Cost him his eyes.

Edm. Thou hast spoken right, 'tis true;
The wheel is come full circle; I am here.

Alb. Methought, thy very gait did prophecy
A royal nobleness: I must embrace thee;
Let sorrow split my heart, if ever I
Did hate thee, or thy father!

Edg. Worthy prince,
I know it well.

Alb. Where have you hid yourself?
How have you known the miseries of your father?

Edg. By nursing them, my lord — List a brief
tale; — —

And, when 'tis told, O, that my heart would
burst!

The bloody proclamation to escape,
That follow'd me so near, (O, our lives' sweet-
ness!

That with the pain of death we'd hourly die,
Rather than die at once!) taught me to shift
Into a madman's rags; to assume a semblance
That very dogs disdain'd: and in this habit
Met I my father with his bleeding rings,
Their precious stones new lost; became his guide,
Led him, begg'd for him, saved him from despair;

Never (O fault!) reveal'd myself unto him,
 Until some half hour past, when I was arm'd,
 Not sure, though hoping, of this good success,
 I ask'd his blessing, and, from first to last,
 Told him my pilgrimage: But his flaw'd heart,
 (Alack, too weak the conflict to support!)
 'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,
 Burst smilingly.

Edm. This speech of yours hath moved me,
 And shall, perchance, do good: but speak you on;
 You look as you had something more to say.

Alb. If there be more, more woful, hold it in;
 For I am almost ready to dissolve,
 Hearing of this.

Edg. This would have seem'd a period
 To such as love not sorrow, but another,
 To amplify too much, would make much more,
 And top extremity.

Whilst I was big in clamor, came there a man,
 Who having seen me in my worst estate,
 Shunn'd my abhorr'd society; but then, finding
 Who 'twas that so endured, with his strong arms
 He fasten'd on my neck, and bellow'd out
 As he'd burst heaven: threw him on my father;
 Told the most piteous tale of Lear and him,
 That ever ear received: which in recounting
 His grief grew puissant, and the strings of life
 Began to crack: Twice then the trumpet sounded,
 And there I left him tranced.

Alb. But who was this?

Edg. Kent, sir, the banish'd Kent; who in
 disguise
 Follow'd his enemy king, and did him service
 Improper for a slave.

*Enter a Gentleman hastily, with a
 bloody Knife.*

Gent. Help! help! O help!

Edg. What kind of help?

Alb. Speak, man.

Edg. What means that bloody knife?

Gent. 'Tis hot, it smokes;
 It came even from the heart of —

Alb. Who, man? speak.

Gent. Your lady, sir, your lady: and her sister

By her is poison'd: she confesses it.

Edm. I was contracted to them both; all three
Now marry in an instant.

Alb. Produce their bodies, be they alive or
dead! —

This judgment of the heavens, that makes us
tremble,

Touches us not with pity. (*Exit Gentleman.*)

Enter KENT.

Edg. Here comes Kent, sir.

Alb. O! it is he.

The time will not allow the compliment,
Which very manners urges.

Kent. I am come
To bid my king and master aye good night;
Is he not here?

Alb. Great thing of us forgot! —
Speak, Edmund, where's the king? and where's
Cordelia? —

Seest this object, Kent?

(*The Bodies of GONERIL and REGAN are brought in.*)

Kent. Alack, why thus?

Edm. Yet Edmund was beloved:
The one the other poison'd for my sake,
And after slew herself.

Alb. Even so. — Cover their faces.

Edm. I pant for life. — Some good I mean
to do,
Despite of mine own nature. Quickly send, —
Be brief in it, — to the castle, for my writ
Is on the life of Lear, and on Cordelia: —
Nay, send in time.

Alb. Run, run, O, run —

Edg. To who, my lord? — Who has the office?
send

Thy token of reprieve.

Edm. Well thought on; take my sword,
Give it the captain.

Alb. Haste thee, for thy life. (*Exit EDMUND.*)

Edm. He hath commission from thy wife and me,

To hang Cordelia in the prison, and
To lay the blame upon her own despair,
That she fordid herself.

Alb. The gods defend her! Bear him hence
awhile. (*EDMUND is borne off.*)

*Enter LEAR, with CORDELIA dead in his
arms; EDGAR, Officers, and others.*

Lear. Howl, howl, howl, howl! — O, you
are men of stones;
Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so
That heaven's vault should crack: — O, she is
gone for ever! —
I know when one is dead, and when one lives;
She's dead as earth: — Lend me a looking-glass;
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,
Why, then she lives.

Kent. Is this the promised end?

Edg. Or image of that horror?

Alb. Fall, and cease!

Lear. This feather stirs; she lives! if it be so,
It is a chance that does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt.

Kent. O my good master! (*Kneeling.*)

Lear. Prithee, away.

Edg. 'Tis noble Kent, your friend.

Lear. A plague upon you, murderers, traitors,
all!

I might have saved her; now she's gone for ever! —
Cordelia, Cordelia, stay a little. Ha!
What is't thou sayst? — Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle, and low; an excellent thing in woman: —
I kill'd the slave that was a hanging thee.

Off. 'Tis true, my lords, he did.

Lear. Did I not, fellow?

I have seen the day, with my good biting faulchion
I would have made them skip: I am old now,
And these same crosses spoil me. — Who are you?
Mine eyes are none o'the best: — I'll tell you
straight.

Kent. If fortune brag of two she loved and
hated,
One of them we behold.

Lear. This is a dull sight: Are you not Kent?

Kent. The same;

Your servant Kent: Where is your servant Caius?

Lear. He's a good fellow, I can tell you that; He'll strike, and quickly too: — He's dead and rotten.

Kent. No, my good lord; I am the very man —

Lear. I'll see that straight.

Kent. That from your first of difference and decay,
Have follow'd your sad steps.

Lear. You are welcome hither.

Kent. Nor no man else; all's cheerless, dark,
and deadly. —

Your eldest daughters have fore-doom'd themselves,
And desperately are dead.

Lear. Ay, so I think.

Alb. He knows not what he says, and vain it is
That we present us to him.

Edg. Very bootless.

Enter an Officer.

Off. Edmund is dead, my lord.

Alb. That's but a trifle here. —

You lords, and noble friends, know our intent.
What comfort to this great decay may come,
Shall be applied: for us, we will resign,
During the life of this old majesty,
To him our absolute power: — You, to your rights;

(*To EDGAR and KENT.*)

With boot, and such addition as your honors
Have more than merited: — All friends shall
taste

The wages of their virtue, and all foes
The cup of their deservings. — O, see, see!

Lear. And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no,
no life:

Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
And thou no breath at all? O, thou wilt come
no more,

Never, never, never, never, never! —

Pray you, undo this button: Thank you, sir. —

Do you see this? — Look on her, — look, —
her lips, —

Look there, look there! — (*He dies.*)

Edg. He faints! — My lord, my lord, —

Kent. Break, heart; I prithee, break!

Edg. Look up, my lord.

Kent. Vex not his ghost: O, let him pass!

he hates him,

That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer.

Edg. O, he is gone, indeed.

Kent. The wonder is, he hath endured so
long:

He but usurp'd his life.

Alb. Bear them from hence. — Our present
business

Is general woe. Friends of my soul, you twain,

(*To KENT and EDGAR.*)

Rule in this realm, and the gored state sustain.

Kent. I have a journey, sir, shortly to go;
My master calls, and I must not say, no.

Alb. The weight of this sad time we must
obey;

Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.

The oldest hath borne most: we, that are young,
Shall never see so much, nor live so long.

(*Exeunt, with a dead march.*)



Shakespeare, William,

[Dramatical works]

Bd.: 3

Nurnberg [u.a.] [1836 - 1842]

P.o.angl. 361 e-1/8

urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10749498-2